THE TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES

BY

H. N. MORSE *and* EDMUND deS. BRUNNER

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THE TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH
IN THE UNITED STATES

The Institute of Social and Religious Research was organized in January, 1921, as the Committee on Social and Religious Surveys. It conducts and publishes studies and surveys and promotes conferences for their consideration. The Committee's aim is to combine the scientific method with the religious motive. It coöperates with other social and religious agencies, but is itself an independent organization.

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INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS RESEARCH

TOWN AND COUNTRY STUDIES
EDMUND DES. BRUNNER, Director

THE TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES

AS ILLUSTRATED BY
DATA FROM ONE HUNDRED SEVENTY-NINE COUNTIES AND BY INTENSIVE STUDIES OF TWENTY-FIVE

BY

H. N. MORSE
and
EDMUND DES. BRUNNER

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FOREWORD

By Charles J. Galpin

IN CHARGE OF DIVISION OF FARM POPULATION
AND RURAL LIFE, U. S. DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

The problem of the rural church will never again utterly baffle the mind and bewilder the soul of America with vastness and confusion. This courageous survey—this patient climb to the top of the mountain, this sweep of the comprehending eye over all the regions, over all the counties—has reduced the vastness of the rural church problem to some order and the confusion to some clarity. Attempts, henceforth, to understand the church of the farmer, of the villager, and of the small-town dweller will start from the mountain and never again from the valleys.

This means, of course, that a strong new light and a brave new hope will envisage future church planning in rural America. No wonder fog and darkness and the psychology of pessimism covered the rural church so long as no one had the heart, or would take the pains, to view the rural situation as a whole in all America.

This feat in surveys—I frankly discount the aspect of so-called failure in the Interchurch Rural Survey enterprise—in my estimation, set the religious soul of rural America free from both ecclesiastical provincialism and statistical timidity. America now can bend its energies to the task of building up noble rural churches —churches nobly planned so as to reach even every last rural family on the land.

Not that the details are worked out. Not that every church body knows now what its logical program is. But rather that a level of thinking is established by the survey, on which vital ethical, social and religious issues will become clearer and clearer; and deadly ambiguities become fewer and fewer. And when an issue of this sort once does unmistakably appear in outline and character—that, for example, the farm family and farm community this way declines, and that other way flourishes—then we trust and we must trust the soul of ecclesiastical America to act and to act with

spiritual justice. It is unthinkable that Christian America can do otherwise.

It was a great thought to survey the rural churches of America in their all-human settings. It was a tremendous achievement to dispel the ignorance of the intellectuals whose learning was confined to small segments of the problem and whose clouds of confusion were vast. It was a fine, discerning thought to come to the rescue of the remnants of that original survey, when human nature had cracked under the strain of the immense task. That it is a providence in the plan of God, I have personally no doubt. And I further believe that Christian statesmen will arise to think out the problems from this high level till rural America has its noble churches and the land-worker suffers no injustice from the hands of churchmen.

INTRODUCTION

THIS volume contains results of the Town and Country Survey of the Interchurch World Movement so far as those results are available. They were salvaged by the Committee on Social and Religious Surveys. In presenting the final summary of the salvaged results, it will be useful to indicate the scope, limitations and organization of the Interchurch surveys, and to appraise their dependability.

The Town and Country Survey of the Interchurch World Movement was organized and under way in every state of the Union before the Movement was six months old. In each state it was under the charge of a paid, full-time executive known as a survey supervisor. About three-fourths of these supervisors were clergymen, all of whom had been country ministers at one time or another. Some of them had been administering rural work up to the time of being called into the Movement; and others had left the active pastorate for the teaching profession. The rest of the supervisors were laymen who were, almost without exception, professors of rural sociology or economics at educational institutions, most of those institutions being state universities. With this personnel, it is reasonable to expect a fair degree of dependability in the data gathered.

The first task of each supervisor was to organize his state. In each county he had a county survey supervisor with whom was associated, if possible, one assistant for each denomination at work within the county. These county supervisors and their assistants were very often younger ministers who had had training in sociology while in college or seminary. More than a thousand, however, of the nearly eight thousand persons who gave of their time to this enterprise were laymen or women. Many of them were school teachers, college instructors, or professors; and still more were students who undertook the survey work for academic credits in connection with courses in sociology.

Each county survey team was responsible for securing the desired community and church data. All were trained for this work by the state supervisors. As a rule they received no compensation,

but their expenses were paid. In all states, however, the state survey supervisor shared in the field work of the survey and nearly 10 per cent. of the counties were studied by paid investigators. At the time of the collapse of the Interchurch World Movement the survey was organized in more than 2,400 of America's 3,000 counties, and from a little more than 1,000 of these counties results of some value were forwarded to headquarters. It was found that 622 counties had been completely covered. These results represent the largest body of information on rural life ever gathered, with the exception of the material in the U. S. Census, and they are reasonably accurate.

Information available in denominational yearbooks, annual reports of county Sunday school associations and other such agencies made it possible for the state supervisors to tell definitely when a survey team had covered every church in the county. By the use of the county maps it was also possible to discover whether every community had been covered. State supervisors first received each completed county survey, gave it its first check and sometimes returned it to the field for additional information. When received at the national headquarters the county results were again checked and rechecked and at times returned for still further information.

It is, therefore, fair to state that this information is much more reliable than that contained in the Federal Religious Census. The Federal census reports only the information returned to it on mailed questionnaires which it sends out to the churches. The Interchurch World Movement sent its survey supervisors to the churches and checked their results from all available denominational sources.

When the Committee on Social and Religious Surveys took over this extensive but incomplete material, it found available, in completely tabulated form, the data concerning 161 counties. Partial tabulations were at once made for a sufficient number of other counties to bring the total up to 300, the additional counties being selected from the point of view both of their country-wide distribution and of the degree of perfection of the data.

On the basis of the data of these 300 counties, twenty-six were selected for intensive field survey and follow-up. These twenty-six represented each of the principal regions in the United States. They were also selected to show as nearly as possible the average condition existing in each region, not only the data of the 300 counties being taken into account but also the judgment of representatives of state colleges of agriculture, state boards of education and other such agencies. It can be claimed, therefore, that each of

these counties is a fair specimen of the region in which it lies. The previous volumes in this series, with the exception of the first three, dealt with these regional results. The first three were designed to indicate the general method of survey as applied to three different situations in the East, Middle West and Far West respectively. The resurvey of the twenty-six counties attested to the general average dependability of the Interchurch survey results.

With a few exceptions, no incorporated places of more than 5,000 population were covered by the Town and Country Survey, except in their rural relationships. The exceptional places, which were fully covered by the survey, were cities, with populations of from slightly more than 5,000 to about 15,000, which were undeniably service stations for surrounding agricultural regions. The industries in each of these were dependent entirely on crops raised in the region.

In the preparation of this volume, the data used have mainly been drawn from two sources. An exhaustive and detailed analysis was made of the material concerning twenty-five of the twenty-six counties which were intensively surveyed. (One was omitted because the field work was completed too late for use in this connection.) To these twenty-five were then added 154 more, making 179 in all. The selection of the 154 was made on the basis of their representative character, geographical distribution and the reliability of their data. For these counties a searching analysis was made of the facts of major importance. Underlying these discussions there are therefore, first, twenty-five counties and second, 179 counties among which the twenty-five are included. For some particular items, a different and larger number of counties has been used, this fact being in each instance noted in the text. Throughout, the controlling purpose has been to base all conclusions on the largest body of reliable data which could be secured. The inclusion or elimination of counties in any particular discussion has been solely to advance this purpose.

POINT OF VIEW

The studies which this book summarizes have been undertaken from the point of view of the Church, with due recognition of the fact that social and economic conditions affect church life. Having originated as a frank attempt to salvage the survey results of the Interchurch World Movement, this study has been limited in its scope by the objectives and schedules of that Movement, the

purpose of which was to present, in terms of time, men, and money the needs of the country church. It approached its work on the county basis and within the county on a community basis. Within each community it studied every church. Some of the facts gathered may appear irrelevant, but upon closer observation they will be found to have a bearing upon the main theme—the problem of the Church in its ministry as an organization to its local constituency.

The greatest amount of time and study has been devoted to the churches themselves. Their history, equipment and finances; their members, services, and church organizations; their Sunday schools, young people's societies and community programs, have all been carefully investigated and evaluated.

The purpose of these surveys has been distinctly practical. It has been hoped that the recommendations made would be of use within each county and within the region of which each county was typical. This hope has been justified to an encouraging degree within the counties. The results of the surveys have been presented to the people in no fewer than ten counties, through public meetings held under the auspices of the Joint Committee on Utilizing Surveys, which is described later in this preface. As a result of conferences in these counties, to which were invited delegates from every church as well as the responsible administrative officers, certain definite things have been accomplished. One county has been allocated exclusively to one denomination, which has adopted the entire program suggested for that county. It is increasing its personnel, building a new church, and opening Sunday schools and preaching points in communities and neighborhoods that were found to be neglected. In another county, teams have been organized to go out from the more populous centers and hold services in communities that were churchless. In coöperation with the State Sunday School Association, a house-to-house religious census was undertaken to locate definitely the unchurched families of newcomers. In the same county the people assembled at a conference adopted a resolution calling upon the denominational overhead officers to desist from "dissipating the Lord's money in certain overchurched communities."

In still another county several meetings have been held, with the coöperation of the State Federation of Churches, looking toward the establishment of the County Council of Churches.

As a result of the survey an effective piece of coöperation was worked out in one state between the state college of agriculture, the

state board of education, the state chamber of commerce and the state Federation of Churches. All of these organizations united in a campaign for better rural life. Two-day meetings were held in various counties throughout the state at which not only were survey results presented but the various officials of these organizations spoke and gave suggestions for rural progress.

In a regional way the most immediate response has come from the Range and the Pacific Coast. Follow-up meetings were held in more counties in these regions than in any others and, quite apart from the local results of these surveys, the various denominational home mission boards, coöperating with the Home Missions Council, have visited four states in this area in an every-community-service-endeavor. This enterprise allocated to some one denomination all of the untouched territory within these states and approached in a coöperative way the problems of relationships where it is necessary to work these out.

Quite apart from the immediate practical results of these studies, they have other values. The survey method used by the Interchurch World Movement represented the best thought of the Church executives as to what they needed to know about the rural church. This volume summarizes the results of this self-examination. An examination of the results will reveal certain obvious limitations in the data. Fact after fact only furnishes the starting point for new investigation. For example, it is shown that per capita contributions vary as between regions, but the economic resources of each county or region are not appraised, so that the question as to which region gives relatively the largest contributions cannot be answered. It is also stated that there is a high mortality among small churches; there is also high devotion of members to those which survive. What elements insure the successful survival of a small church? The present study stops with facts since it lacks the data to answer the question. Some further studies along lines such as these are being prosecuted by the Committee. It is attempting to find out some of the factors which make for church efficiency. It is hoped that this volume and the one to which allusion has just been made will show many other problems for which a solution, together with its explanation, should be found.

Valuable help was given by the Home Missions Council; by the Council of Women for Home Missions through their Subcommittee on Town and Country, and by a committee appointed jointly by the Home Missions Council and the Federal Council of Churches for the purpose of coöperating with the Committee on

Social and Religious Surveys in endeavoring to translate the results of the survey into action. The members of this Joint Committee on Utilizing Surveys are:

JOINT COMMITTEE ON UTILIZING SURVEYS

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CHAPTER I

Regional Characteristics

TOWN and country surveys of the Interchurch World Movement, and those of the Committee on Social and Religious Surveys, made use of an initial division of the country into regions, each having characteristics so different from those of the other regions as to give a degree of individuality to its social and religious problems. This regional division was based largely on a statement prepared by Dr. Warren H. Wilson, of Columbia University, and published originally in *Homelands,* in August, 1920. It was used in the conviction that the religious or social worker must necessarily be concerned with the economic and social characteristics of the region in which he works. Those characteristics deeply affect, if they do not create, his particular problems; they have a certain determining influence on the methods which he must use, and to a considerable extent determine his objectives. The factors which underlie the major variations between region and region are chiefly of three kinds. First and most fundamental are the physical factors: topography, climate, soil, and natural resources. Second, are the economic factors closely related to the physical: the existing type of economic activity, both agricultural and industrial, and the general economic trend. Third, are the historical and social, or, in Dr. Wilson's phraseology, the "Episodic" factors: those episodes in the life of a region which have given it its social character. Some of these are political, some religious, some racial. They must be known if a region is to be understood.

The map found on page 19 of this volume shows the regional outline which was used for survey purposes. It must be understood, as Dr. Wilson states, that not all of the boundary lines of these regions are sharply defined. Often a whole state or a part of a state could have been put in an area other than the one in

which it was placed. In the discussion of the separate regions reference will be made to cases to which this statement applies.

The material in the present chapter relates to the more general aspects of the social and economic situation. Each chapter of this volume makes regional comparisons of material relating to the particular subject with which it deals. Such comparisons are not anticipated here, where the purpose is merely to give the background against which those detailed comparisons may be read.

The following nine regions were used in the original classification:

Colonial Region. This includes New England, New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey. Because of certain characteristics in common, parts of West Virginia belong with Western Pennsylvania, and parts of Maryland, which are much like Eastern Pennsylvania, should perhaps have been included here.

Middle West Region. This consists of the states of Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, Iowa and Wisconsin.

Southern Region. This takes in the states south of Mason and Dixon's Line and the Ohio River east of the Mississippi, and includes Louisiana. It does not include the Southern Mountain Region, description of which follows.

Southern Mountain Region. Included in this division are about 250 counties in parts of the nine Southern states of the Appalachian area.

Northwestern Region. This comprises Minnesota and North and South Dakota, while eastern Montana may perhaps be considered a part of it.

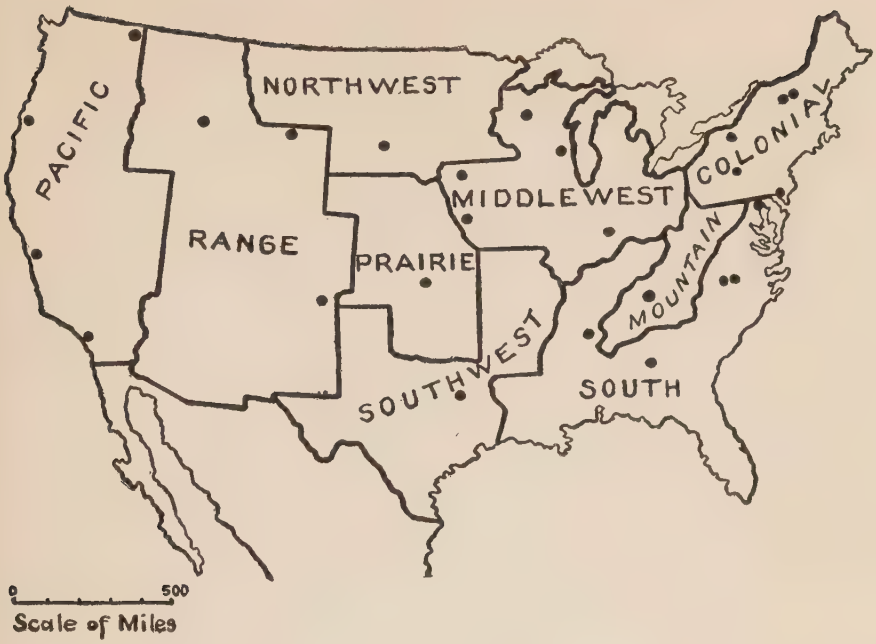
Prairie Region. Kansas and Nebraska are included in this division. Oklahoma may also be considered here, although it is also in many ways characteristic of the Southwestern Region.

Southwestern Region. This includes Missouri, Arkansas, and Texas, and possibly Oklahoma.

The Range Region. This includes Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, Colorado, Wyoming, Idaho, Nevada, and western Montana.

Pacific Region. This includes California, Oregon, and Washington.

Working with few cases the Committee on Social and Religious Surveys combined for its purpose the Southern and Southern Mountain Regions and divided the Prairie and Northwest and Southwest between the Middle West and Range.



Map showing the regional divisions adopted for Interchurch World Movement surveys, with the location of the twenty-six counties resurveyed by the Committee on Social and Religious Surveys. The data in Chapters I, II and III are based on this division. The data from the resurvey of the twenty-six counties are presented on a basis of five regions instead of nine, because of the small number of counties restudied. The Mountain division and most of the Southwest were combined with the South, and the Northwest was divided between the Range and the Middle West, with which region the Prairie was also placed.

The Colonial Region

The Colonial area is the great urban-industrial zone of America. Agriculture is secondary and each decade finds it in a relatively less important position. There was a decrease in the number of farms of every size in each state in this area during the last decade and also a decrease in the total farm acreage and in the improved land in farms except in Vermont. The average acreage per farm slightly increased. The percentage of the farms operated by tenants, never very high here, somewhat decreased and now stands at 7.4 per cent. in New England and 20.7 per cent. in the Middle Atlantic States. At the same time the percentage of farms operated by persons of foreign birth increased to 18.1 per cent. for New England, and to 11 per cent. for the Middle Atlantic States.

On the other hand, the rural population is apparently more stable in this region than in any other, with the possible exception of the Southern Mountains. For the United States as a whole, in 1920, 52.5 per cent. of all farmers had been living on their present farms for five years or more. In the Colonial area this percentage is 67. In the United States as a whole, 48.1 per cent. of all farmers are forty-five years of age or older. In the Colonial area this percentage is 61.3. Except in sections where folk depletion has become a serious problem, or where there has been the greatest influx of foreign born, the rural population is chiefly of old local stock and the upper age-groups tend to predominate. The outstanding impressions concerning this region may be summarized as follows:

(a) In the thirty years from 1890 to 1920 the urban population of New England increased from 33.2 per cent. of the total to 79.2 per cent. In New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania it increased from 42.3 per cent. to 74.9 per cent. During the last decade the rural population throughout the area has not only decreased relatively but also actually, despite an increase of more than one-seventh in the total population. The New England states have 29.8 per cent. and the Middle Atlantic States have 47.4 per cent. of their population living in cities of 100,000 population or over. In thirty years the number of incorporated places of 2,500 population or over increased from 548 to 896. The great metropolitan zones of cities like New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Buffalo, Rochester, dominate great regions of contiguous territory. It is apparent that urban, suburban, and small industrial community growth is the predominant source of population increase throughout this area.

There is also apparent an expansive trend to industry, so that the small towns are coming to depend more and more on some form of manufacture. Quite apart from this industrial development there is an increasing dominance of the village over the country from an institutional and service point of view. Except in parts of Pennsylvania, open country institutions are very generally declining. What this means to rural life is discussed in the volume of this series entitled "The Country Church in Industrial Zones."

(b) Agriculture in the Colonial area may be said to be approaching bed rock. There was a time when it was common to speak of the decline of eastern agriculture and to call attention to the abandonment of farms and to the depletion of the rural population. It appears, now, however, that agriculture here is on a reasonably stable foundation. There is not much room for expansion, and indeed additional encroachments due to urban growth may be expected, but within the limits set for it, agriculture presents a sound, economic opportunity. Dairying is the most important single aspect of farming, with fruit, truck, tobacco, and general farming also important.

(c) Large areas throughout this region, particularly in New England and northern New York and New Jersey, are being taken over and added to for summer play grounds. The effects of this, and of other influences, upon local institutions are clearly shown in "The Country Church in Colonial Counties."[1]

(d) Country and small town churches still show, as they have shown for 200 years, the characteristics of the European traditions behind them. Only in this region has the country church had, as a rule, the long pastorate, the adequate church building and manse, and the sort of standing in its community traceable to the tradition of the "Established Church." Further, the great missionary influences of our American churches were born and nurtured here.

(e) In social life, too, the Colonial tradition has been less modified in the rural parts of this area than in rural districts elsewhere. The Puritan influence in New England, that of the Dutch in New York, and of the Germans, Scotch-Irish and Quakers in Pennsylvania, have put a lasting stamp on the life of many of the rural communities.

(f) In considerable areas, hill-town decadence or folk depletion has been a real problem. Many of the retarded districts have lost in population through each successive decade for a hundred years,

[1] See also the Committee's publication, "A Church and Community Survey of Salem Co., New Jersey."

and the original stock has given of its best to the settlement of other parts of the country.

(g) The increasing racial complexity of the rural population is an important factor. Various strains of European immigrants have gained foothold upon the land. Where farming has not attracted them, the industrial life of the smaller towns has been the magnet. In addition to this, there are, of course, large areas in Pennsylvania where the original German stock has kept its distinctive characteristics down to the present time.

Throughout the Colonial area the county has not been important as a political unit, while in New England it is almost non-existent. In this region the minor civil division has the more important place in the political life.

The Middlewestern Region

The Middle West is referred to as "the Valley of Democracy," and as "the Heart of America." It is regarded as representing the norm of American rural life. It might be called "The Great American Average." There were three main population movements into the Middle West. The first was from New England and New York, traces of which can be clearly seen as far west as Iowa. The second was from the near South. It came in by way of the Ohio River Valley. The third was by direct importation from Europe, chiefly from Germany and Scandinavian countries. The effects of these three diverse influences are clearly apparent in the religious and institutional life, and in the general cultural conditions, of the areas which they affected. The Western Reserve may stand as the symbol of the first, the Ohio River Valley of the second, and Southern Illinois or Central Wisconsin of the third. In most respects Michigan and Wisconsin are the variants in this region. They have many characteristics which would ally them rather with the Northwestern Region than with the states immediately to the south of them. Two strips running clear across this area show retarded rural development. The first of these includes the southernmost counties of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois; the other, the upper peninsula of Michigan and the wooded sections of northern Wisconsin.

Wisconsin was the only state in this area which did not lose in rural population during the last decade, and her gain was very small. The rural population in incorporated places increased, and the loss was in the farm population and in the population of the

unincorporated hamlets. Each recent decade has shown an increase in the proportion of the urban population. This change has been coincident with the spread of industrialism in parts of this region during the last decade, and more generally with the rise of the agricultural village and the appearance of the retired farmer, especially in Illinois and Iowa.

Wisconsin was the only state in this area which did not show a decrease in the total number of farms; and Wisconsin and Michigan were the only states which showed increase in the total farm acreage and in the total acreage of improved farm land. In each of these states such conditions are due to the existence of considerable areas which still have pioneer characteristics. There is no longer much good land for settlement in Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio; but rural expansion may be expected to go on slowly for some time in Michigan and Wisconsin.

In general, throughout the Middle West, the tendency is toward the farm of intermediate size and away from both the very large and the very small farm. Except in Wisconsin, every state showed, in the last census period, a loss in the number of farms in every size-class under one hundred acres, and a gain in those of between one hundred acres and 500 acres.

Every state in this area showed during the last decade an increase in the percentage of farms operated by tenants. Here again Michigan and Wisconsin appear as variants, for while tenantry has been on the increase it still stands at a point much lower than in the other states of this region, a fact which is due in part to economic causes and in part to racial influences. The other states stand well toward the top among all those in the Union in the percentage of tenantry. The figures for 1920 are as follows: Illinois 42.7 per cent., Iowa 41.7 per cent., Indiana 32 per cent., Ohio 29.5 per cent., Michigan 17.7 per cent., Wisconsin 14.4 per cent. In part, these high percentages are due to the great amount of speculation in farm lands. In Illinois and Iowa particularly, farm values have steadily increased and in the opinion of many have reached a point which reflects not so much their intrinsic income-producing value as their speculative value. This was especially apparent in the year after the War. For example, it was estimated that during 1919 between 10 per cent. and 20 per cent. of all the farms in Iowa changed hands, some of them many times. It is probable that the overwhelming majority of tenant farmers eventually reach ownership, but the speculating in farm values has undoubtedly retarded the tenants' progress toward the purchase of a farm. The better developed

regions of the Middle West undoubtedly show country life in its most substantial form. This is the stronghold of the "Farm Bureau," and the greatest agricultural colleges are here. There has been a remarkable increase in farmers' coöperation. In Iowa, 73.1 per cent. of the farmers have automobiles, a proportion exceeded by only one other state. For the whole region the percentage is 59 as compared with 30.7 for the national average. The general excellence of this section in matters affecting public improvement is set forth in "Rural Church Life in the Middle West."

A study of the religious life and institutions reveals that the Colonial traditions have been modified and overlaid with other traditions. Except in the German and Scandinavian communities the country churches have never had resident pastors. They show the influence of pioneer traditions. There is very slight trace in this section of the "Established Church" tradition save as it appears in the liturgical churches of the German and Scandinavian groups.

The county as a civic unit has, on the average, somewhat greater importance than in the Colonial area, though the minor civil division is a more important political factor.

The Southern Region

In any consideration of the South, the effects of the plantation system and of slavery are obvious. In like manner one must take account of the period of economic exhaustion and of general poverty which followed the Civil War. The South is by no means one uniform section. The Southern Mountain Region is carved out of it bodily; but aside from that there are variations of considerable importance. Thus the cotton section, the tobacco section, and the sections where general farming predominates are different from one another not only in economic characteristics but in social characteristics as well.

For the South as a whole certain generalizations may be made:

(a) First may be mentioned the extensive industrial development now in process. Until recently the South was almost exclusively an agricultural area. It is rapidly becoming an important industrial area. Manufacturing has greatly increased, as witness the large number of cotton mills which have been established in North and South Carolina. There are vast coal and iron deposits in Alabama, Tennessee, and Kentucky. Birmingham is becoming an important steel center. The South has extensive timber resources, and Memphis is said to be the greatest hardwood market

in the world. The South has undeveloped power resources of almost measureless extent.

Every state in the South shows a smaller proportion of its total population classified as rural in the last census. Every Southern state increased in total population except Mississippi, which has the highest percentage of rural population of any state in the Union.

(b) Important changes have been taking place in the type of agriculture. The steady increase in the areas infested by the boll weevil has occasioned in many parts of the South a decrease in cotton acreage and a consequent diversification of crops. There has been during recent years a persistent effort to encourage the growth of food and forage crops. The agricultural extension work in the South, initiated under Dr. Seaman Knapp, has been an outstanding development. For the South as a whole there has been an increase in the number of farms but a decrease in the total farm acreage, showing a marked tendency toward the small-sized farm. There was no very great variation in the percentage of tenantry during the last decade. It is high in the cotton states, which also have the most Negro farmers. The two facts are closely related. The five states which stand at the top of the list in both these respects are the following:

States	*Percentage of Farms Operated by Tenants*	*Percentage of Farms Operated by Negroes*
South Carolina	64.5 per cent.	56.6 per cent.
Georgia	66.6 per cent.	41.9 per cent.
Mississippi	66.1 per cent.	59.2 per cent.
Alabama	57.9 per cent.	37.2 per cent.
Louisiana	57.1 per cent.	45.8 per cent.

Economic coöperation has not made very much headway in the South, although there are signs now that it is entering into a period of development. Perhaps no phase of farming in the country has been more in need of coöperative organization than has cotton farming; but the fact that so much of it has been done on small-acreage farms and by Negroes, or by uneducated white farmers, has made the organization of effective coöperation very difficult.

(c) The South has been the most backward part of the country educationally, as is evidenced by the per capita expenditure for education, the proportion of the population in schools, and the degree of illiteracy. Nor has this characterized merely the colored people. There have been large numbers of relatively uneducated people in the country and in the small towns. The effect of the mountains may be seen here. They have been the population reservoir of the South, constantly spilling over into its surrounding towns and cities,

filling their mills and factories. This mountain stock is good stock but generally speaking has been undeveloped and uneducated. At the present time, however, the South is making very considerable progress educationally and has displayed wide interest in this matter.

(d) The South shows perhaps greater extremes in living conditions in its rural districts and small towns than any other part of the United States. Except in the great plantation homes, conditions in the country are still generally very primitive. The average house is almost entirely without the ordinary conveniences. The average small town is also on the whole poorly kept and poorly provided with public utilities.

(e) The county has been of great importance as a civic unit. In consequence, the rate of incorporation of towns has been high. There is also rather clearly apparent a sharp cleavage between town and open country. Even less than in most other sections does the town serve the contiguous territory socially or institutionally.

(f) In general the social and civic policy, as in education and religion, has been characterized by its pronounced conservatism. In the main this has been owing to its social system and to the lack of developed educational influences. There are now, however, many liberalizing influences.

(g) In religion the South has had two characteristic developments. The first is that of the pastorless church, with an itinerant preacher holding occasional services, and its annual revival; the second—and perhaps this is merely a variation of the other—is the church served by a non-professional local minister. Each system tends to conservatism of method and to a high degree of emotional instability.

The Southern Mountain Region

There is available for the student such an exhaustive and authoritative, as well as readable, treatment of the Southern Mountains in John Campbell's "The Southern Highlander and His Homeland" that any extended discussion here would be superfluous. The Southern Highlands, as Mr. Campbell describes them, include an area of 112,000 square miles covering the whole of West Virginia, and parts of Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolina, Alabama, Tennessee, Kentucky, and Georgia, and embracing in all about 260 counties. These counties have a total population of approximately six million, of which 16.1 per cent. live in ninety-one places of 2,500 population, 4.4 per cent. live in 156 places of from 1,000

to 2,500 population, and the balance of 79.5 per cent. live outside of incorporated places having 1,000 or more population. A great proportion of this population is native-born white and rural. The small Negro population is chiefly in the larger towns. The foreign-born population is negligible. Outside of the towns the population of whole counties is almost 100 per cent. native-born Anglo-Saxon.

The problem of the Southern Mountains has been the problem of retardation. Economic opportunities have been meager. There are resources in timber and mining, but until recently these have not been developed on any considerable scale. Agricultural resources, in most sections, are not adequate to the need of a large population. Poverty, therefore, has been general; educational opportunities have been relatively few; living conditions are more primitive than elsewhere in the South; transportation facilities have been poor, although they are now improving; diseases traceable to malnutrition or soil pollution have been common and widespread. The topography of the mountains has made for many small neighborhoods and for isolation.

The Southern Mountaineer is characterized by an extreme form of independence, by personal aloofness, emotionalism, and mental alertness.

The religious institutions show pioneer characteristics in their extreme. Denominationalism is a dominant religious fact. Partisanships of all kinds are intense.

The Southern Mountains have been and are a great home mission field in which many of the national missionary societies are at work in support of hospital, school, and church enterprises.

The Northwestern Region

This region includes Minnesota, the two Dakotas, and the eastern part of Montana, and is a district still in the process of formation. On the east it has begun to take on the characteristics of the Middle West. At its western end it shades into the frontier. In its center it is in certain respects not unlike the Prairie Region, and the chief characteristics common to the whole area are those of a spring wheat region. It is throughout predominantly agricultural, though Minnesota has an extensive lumber interest and also includes a number of highly productive iron ranges. North and South Dakota form the most exclusively rural part of the area, with 86.4 per cent. and 84 per cent. respectively of their total populations classified as rural. In Minnesota the rural element forms 55.9 per cent. of the

population. In each case the 1920 rural percentage is somewhat lower than in 1910. The Dakotas are like the states south of them in that as one goes westward the climate becomes more arid and agriculture in general more nearly approximates the pioneer type. Recently these states and eastern Montana have experienced several years of continuous drouth which resulted in crop failure and caused the people great hardships.

For the area as a whole there has been a considerable increase in the number of farms, in the total farm acreage, and in the acreage of improved land in farms. Especially is this true in Montana where the improved farm acreage more than trebled in the last decade. The farms average large in size and are increasing. In this particular Minnesota, with an average farm acreage of 170 acres, shows its similarity to the Middle West, as compared with an average of 464 for North Dakota, 461 for South Dakota and 605 for Montana.

The percentage of farms operated by tenants is not so high as in the Middle West or in the Prairie states, but is considerably higher than in the Range states. In this, as in some other particulars, these states seem to present a condition midway between the highly developed Middle West and Prairie states and the frontier areas of the Inter-Mountain region. Tenantry is lowest in Montana, where the percentage is but 11.3. It is highest in South Dakota, with 34.9 per cent. The greatest proportional change in the decade was in North Dakota, which increased its percentage from 14.3 to 25.6. In Minnesota it is 24.7 per cent.

Agricultural coöperation has developed very greatly in this region, particularly in Minnesota and North Dakota. This has doubtless been owing to a number of causes. Both wheat and live stock are phases of farming which lend themselves readily to coöperative organizations and in which the need of such organizations is very apparent. Then, too, these states have on their farms a large Scandinavian and German population, and these are groups to which coöperation has been more or less natural. Further, there has been in this whole area a sharp cleavage between the towns and cities on the one hand and the open country districts on the other. The cities have been controlled by the manufacture and the exploitation of farm products. Even the smaller towns have existed or have seemed to exist primarily for purposes of exploitation rather than for purposes of service. These are the conditions which accelerated the development of economic coöperation and which resulted in the Non-Partisan League movement.

Racial differences are important in social and religious life, particularly in Minnesota and North Dakota. The language line is apparent in most small communities, clearly dividing the social and religious life of the communities. Many Russian farmers have recently settled in North Dakota.

The size of the farms and the wide dispersion of population have made social life much less cohesive than in the Middle West. The social, religious and economic influence of the villages is not so strong nor well directed. The villages themselves tend to narrowness and a provincial character. This is the country of the "Daughter of the Middle Border" and "Main Street."

The Prairie Region

The Prairie is a diminishing area which is changing both its boundaries and its characteristics. Possibly only Kansas and Nebraska and a part of Oklahoma should be included. Its characteristics have extended, however, into all of the surrounding states. But at present, in view of existing tendencies, it is hardly clear that there should be a separate Prairie Region at all. Eastern Kansas and Nebraska, which have heavier rainfall than prevails further west, are in most particulars like western Iowa and Missouri and are growing more like them. Nebraska is becoming one of the wealthiest agricultural states in the Union and Kansas is not far behind. This is the winter wheat region where diversified farming is coming wherever rainfall or irrigation supplies sufficient moisture. Western Nebraska and Kansas, again except where irrigation is possible, have dry-farming characteristics, and that means large farms and scattered communities. Both of these states are predominantly rural in their population. In each state there has been a slight decrease in the number of farms but increase in the total farm acreage. Farms average large, but in Nebraska they are nearly one hundred acres larger on the average than in Kansas. The percentage of tenantry is high and increasing. It stands now at 40.4 in Kansas and 42.9 in Nebraska.

From every agricultural point of view these are among the most progressive states. Farmers' coöperation is well established and widespread, and on the whole it is very successful. In farm conveniences of various sorts these states rank high. Nebraska stands first in the Union in the percentage of farmers owning automobiles. Its percentage is 75.6, while the percentage of Kansas is 62.

Village life is on the whole less developed culturally than in the

Middle West. The cities are comparatively few. Both cities and towns are closely related to the country round about and there is no clear difference between the intellectual life of the country and that of the towns. In public opinion these states represent a Puritan survival. They were among the foremost advocates of prohibition and have been early in the field in the limitation of the use of tobacco. The influence of the churches has been thrown behind this sort of crusading.[2]

The Southwestern Region

The Southwest, as it has been defined, would include part of Missouri, Arkansas, Texas, and perhaps Oklahoma. This is the section made out of the fusion of the South and West. Northern and southern traditions are brought into close competition here, and each has modified the other. The original population was of the southern tradition, including both Negro and white elements. Progressive western elements have combined with them, particularly in Oklahoma and in Texas.

Except for the similarity in their population, these states have few common characteristics. Parts of Missouri are in all respects like the Middle West and should be so regarded. There is a considerable mountain area in the Ozarks, taking in parts of both Missouri and Arkansas, which has characteristics in general like the Appalachian mountain regions.

At present there appear to be greater agricultural opportunities, at least in parts of the Ozark Mountains than in the Appalachians.

Texas combines in itself the characteristics of several ordinary states. Agricultural conditions vary greatly as between its cotton regions, its cattle and dry-farming areas, and those parts which are gradually turning to general farming. Oklahoma presents characteristics as unlike as if it were two states. Both economic conditions and population clearly differentiate the area included in the old Indian territory from the rest of the state. Agriculturally, this whole region is predominantly a one-crop region, but the one crop is different for the different parts of the area. There has been an increase in the number of farms and a slight increase in the total farm acreage. The percentage of tenantry, except in Missouri, is high, but there has been no general increase during the decade.

[2] See the Committee's publication, "Sedgwick County, Kansas, a Church and Community Survey," for a study of a typical prairie county.

The percentages are now for Missouri, 28.8; for Oklahoma, 51; for Arkansas, 51.3, and for Texas, 53.3.

Agriculture is the principal resource, although oil is increasingly important in the economic life of Texas and Oklahoma. The population is predominantly rural. The cities, except in a few cases where they have been built largely by oil interests, are closely related to the agricultural life.

There is by no means a homogeneous population throughout this area. Negroes are especially numerous in Arkansas and in Texas, and racial feeling is often tense. In Texas there are probably at least 650,000 Mexicans. They are found mostly along the border, but of late have begun to scatter pretty well over the entire state. Many of these Mexicans are employed as farm hands. Some are section hands on the railroads, and others do much of the rough work in the towns. Texas also has a large number of Czecho-Slovaks, possibly 200,000. Most of them are farmers. They form a prosperous, substantial element in the citizenship. Oklahoma is the first state in the Union in the number of Indians within its borders, having fully 110,000. These are not confined to reservations but are scattered through the farming areas. The Indians as a class have valuable holdings in land.

Home conditions in the country are, generally speaking, like those in the poorer parts of the South. The smaller towns, too, are often primitive and unattractive. Many of the larger towns, however, are exceedingly well kept and progressive. The health conditions are in the main those of the South. In Arkansas, for example, hookworm is very prevalent. The cities and towns are sympathetic with the open country but contribute little to the development of the farm.

Religious life shows both southern and western influences. Country churches are small and without resident pastors. Denominationalism is everywhere an important factor and is accentuated by the presence throughout most of this area of both the northern and southern branches of the major denominations. Emotionalism is a dominant characteristic of religious life.

The Range Region

The Range is here regarded as including Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, Colorado, Wyoming, Idaho, Nevada, and Western Montana. It may perhaps be said that just two things are characteristic of this

entire area, the mountainous country and the light rainfall. These are the things that have most decisively influenced its economic and social character. Each state has certain individual characteristics which differentiate it sharply from the others; and these perhaps should be mentioned first.

New Mexico in general looks toward the South and the East. El Paso is its social and economic capital. Two-thirds of its residents are of Spanish origin. The majority of these are American-born, many of them, indeed, of stock that has been on this side of the Rio Grande for several generations; but they are Spanish in language and in general characteristics. There is also a large contingent of the newer Mexican immigrants. New Mexico is fourth among the states in the number of Indians. Towns are few, small, and scattered. In the farming districts dry farming and cattle-raising are the rule. Population is sparse. Where there is irrigation the land is very productive and there are fine communities.

Arizona has its affiliations with Southern California, and Los Angeles is its trade center. It is the second state in the Union in the number of Indians, having all told 44,000. It has a large Mexican contingent, numbering at least 190,000 and chiefly the more recent immigrants employed in the copper mines and smelters and on the cotton plantations. Copper is an important economic resource. Agriculture means chiefly cattle or sheep raising, except where irrigation is practiced, as for example in the Salt River Valley, where an extra fine quality of Egyptian long-staple cotton is raised. Both Arizona and New Mexico are great health resorts, particularly for persons afflicted with tuberculosis.

Colorado has fewer Mexicans than the other states in this group. There are perhaps 100,000, chiefly in the mining centers, as around Trinidad. It has some Indians, but not many. Mining is a primary resource; dry farming is practiced, and in some places there is irrigation.

Utah is characterized chiefly by the fact that its population is predominantly Mormon. Dry farming and irrigation have both been developed to a high degree.

Idaho is made up of two widely different areas. It is not possible to get from southern to northern Idaho by ordinary means of travel without going out of the state. Southern Idaho is a high-grade farming country in which there is both dry farming and irrigation. Mormonism is very strong here. The natural outlet of this region is by way of Salt Lake City and Ogden. Northern Idaho is primarily a lumbering country. It belongs, for all ordinary pur-

poses, with eastern Washington, to which it is more closely related.

Wyoming is as undeveloped as any state in this region. It has mining resources and oil. There are some developed irrigation projects; elsewhere farming, of the dry-farming type, and cattle-raising. Travel facilities are meager, the state having only one main railroad in each direction and a few branch lines.

Western Montana is a great mining and lumber region with some fine agricultural valleys. Its agricultural characteristics are not unlike those of Idaho or Wyoming. There is comparatively little communication between Montana and the states further South because of the direction of the railroads, Montana being more closely allied with Spokane than with any other great city outside its borders.

Nevada is a state in which agricultural institutions are of comparatively small importance. Mining is the chief resource. Nevada looks to the coast, and in particular to San Francisco, for its outlet. An outstanding characteristic is the great amount of waste or unreclaimed land which it contains.

These seven states are in total area among the twelve largest in the Union, but they are among those having the smallest amount of improved farm land. Colorado with 11.6 per cent. of its total area represented by improved land in farms is far and away the leader of this group. Idaho with 8.4 per cent. is second. Percentages for the other states are as follows: Wyoming, 3.4 per cent.; Utah, 3.1 per cent.; New Mexico, 2.2 per cent.; Arizona, .97 per cent., and Nevada, .83 per cent. Of course, the amount of land used for grazing purposes is very great. The chief agricultural progress in this area will be along the line of irrigation development. Much of the land is very fertile when watered.

The second outstanding characteristic is general isolation. The type of farming practiced and the great stretches of unimproved land have necessarily made for a diffused type of settlement. This makes for a lack of neighborhood or community organization and for an absence of social life. People will gather from great distances for social affairs. But the opportunities for the ordinary forms of social intercourse are in the country sections very meager. Towns are scattered, but exercise a considerable influence over the surrounding country. Permanent settlement, except in a few areas, has not yet been accomplished.

A third characteristic is the general high quality of the population, which is chiefly American with a high average of property holders. Racial differences, where these exist, are sharply marked.

In general, one is impressed by the freedom from convention and social restraint.

Lastly, these states are all characterized by a low estate of religion, unless one should make an exception in favor of the Mormon establishment, where the church has very evident influence. Elsewhere the churches are generally inferior in type, insecurely rooted, with little social sympathy. They have not yet taken hold of the life, or commanded the spiritual attention of the people. This is clearly shown in the "Church on the Changing Frontier."

The Pacific Region

A different arrangement of states by regions might easily be defended which would include California with Arizona and Nevada as one section, and place Oregon, Washington and Idaho in another. California and the northern Pacific states are different in many respects. Agriculturally, California was first a cattle country, next a wheat country, and latterly a highly specialized farming area, with fruit predominating. The state has a number of distinct areas in the outline of which topography has been an important factor. Its interior is divided into two great valleys. Of these the northern, or Sacramento Valley, is largely a dry-farming or grazing area. The southern, or San Joaquin Valley, is becoming a vast fruit growing region, in which citrous fruit and raisins, and various fruits of the north temperate zone are grown. North of San Francisco, agriculture is a question of dairying, general farming, the raising of wine grapes and of some other fruits. There are extensive lumber interests in this part of the state. Southern California is the great citrous fruit center.

Nothing has distinguished California agriculturally more than has its remarkable development of coöperative organization. Each crop, particularly each kind of fruit, has its own highly developed coöperative sales organization, and these are among the most successful organizations of the kind in the country. In its more favored sections, California's agriculture has been to an unusual degree prosperous. Like all developing country, but to a degree unlike any other, California has been the paradise of the booster and the land speculator. The population shows elements as diversified as the topography. The Mexican contingent centering in and around Los Angeles numbers at least 250,000. The Japanese element, not large in number, being only 2 per cent. of the total population, presents one of the most acute forms of racial conflict in this

country. Other foreign groups are increasing in numbers, among them Portuguese, East Indians, Armenians. The American stock is by no means all of one strain. People from the Middle West and from the East have largely developed Southern California. Their influence is easily distinguished from that of the "Native Sons."

The county has perhaps more civic influence than in any other part of the United States. The towns, also, have a close relation to the open country and are important centers for rural service. The place of the town and the county is due in part to the extensive advertising which has been carried on; the exploiting of the agricultural area of a given town has unmistakably strengthened the bonds of association between the town and the contiguous farming area.

The general spirit of California is one of progress. In all public improvements it has taken the lead. Its social life has the characteristics of its open air climate, accentuating the freedom and initiative of the West.

Its churches are not so highly successful. They are still too much under the Eastern tradition and are poorly appreciated by the population. The unfavorable contrast between the state of religion and the state of public improvement generally is clearly evidenced in the two counties which are the theme of "Irrigation and Religion."

Washington and Oregon differ from California not less in their general characteristics than in their topography and climate. The more ample rainfall and the more severe winters make farming very different from that in Southern California. There is general farming and dairying; in certain regions wheat-raising; in others the growing of prunes, apples and other northern fruits. But agriculture is not yet of leading importance. Among all industries, lumber perhaps would stand highest. Oregon, for example, is the first state in the Union in its amount of standing timber. It has 452,000,000,000 B. M. feet, representing one-fifth of all the standing timber in the United States. It ranks third among the states in the amount of its annual cut. In Washington also lumber is a great economic resource, although it has less standing timber. In these two states there are probably 350,000 lumberjacks.

The communities vary in characteristics according to their different economic backgrounds, and in almost any considerable area communities may be found representing the different stages of economic development. For example, there will be lumber towns, towns that have been lumber towns and are trying to become agricultural centers, agricultural centers in all degrees of development, as well

as a few towns whose economic future is uncertain.[3] The small town in the West is ever a hopeful project; but for many of them, their hopes, which are almost always in the direction of urban achievement, are certain to be unsuccessful.

The Northwest has the same degree of civic and institutional progressiveness that characterizes California. It has an even greater degree of social plasticity. Its religious institutions are perhaps somewhat better appreciated but are not essentially in a different class from those in other parts of the West.

[3] See "Church and Community Survey of Pend Oreille Co., Wash."

CHAPTER II

Some National Deductions

THIS chapter presents an attempt to use data gathered in the field survey or drawn from the census as the basis of certain interpretative deductions in terms of the entire town and country area of the United States. It is not, in a strict sense, an analysis of such data. No more is claimed for it than that it presents a better-established estimate in the matters treated than it has hitherto been possible to make.

The facts bearing on the religious situation are based entirely upon the completed surveys of 179 counties studied by the Interchurch World Movement, which have been selected out of nearly 300 available completely surveyed counties in order to give a proper geographical distribution. The results with respect to these 179 counties were checked by a careful and exhaustive re-survey of twenty-six counties. There is good reason to believe that, taken as a whole, the available data are representative of rural religious conditions.

For the purposes of the present chapter, accurate data were obtained from the census and other sources as to the number and distribution of population by states and regions. Ratios were established between each region as a whole and the counties within it which were surveyed on the basis of the total population, distributed according to type of community. These ratios were used in relation to other facts established in the survey to produce the particular estimates which are here presented.

While the results cannot be regarded as wholly free from error, it is believed that they are substantially correct and give a reasonably trustworthy presentation of the existing situation.

There should be a word of explanation as to the relation between the population figures given here and also in the statistical summary of this series, and the figures in the United States census returns for 1920. The census returns are used in every case; but the method of using them is such that there may seem to be certain discrepancies which do not in fact exist. In five particulars there is a difference of method between the survey and the census which

should be taken into account. First, the census defines as rural all population living outside of incorporated places of 2,500 or more. The survey deals with what is called the town and country area, and this is defined as including all population living outside of incorporated places of 5,000 or more.

Second, with certain exceptions for the New England states, the census regards the population of all unincorporated places as rural. The population of unincorporated places is not separately noted in the census returns. In the survey no distinction is made between an incorporated and an unincorporated place. All places noted in standard atlases are combined according to certain size-groupings. It, therefore, follows that the number of places of a specified size and the total population included therein, as reported in the survey, would exceed the number and population of such places as reported in the census; but this difference would be balanced by the corresponding difference in the total of the unclassified rural population, so that the total population reported for a given state or area remains unchanged. The population figures for unincorporated places were obtained from the best available sources outside the census.

Third, the census, in noting the population of incorporated places, applies to each such place the terminology in local use as fixed by the various state laws; that is, the use of the terms city, town, borough, etc., is not in any way indicative of the size of the place. The survey has used an arbitrary and uniform terminology; that is, it defines as a city any place over 5,000; as a town, any place from 2,500 up to 5,000; as a village, any place from 250 up to 2,500; as a hamlet, any place from 25 up to 250; the remaining population being classified as open country.

Fourth, the census, of course, takes no account of communities in the social sense, but deals wholly with civil divisions. In the survey no account is taken of the minor civil divisions, the analysis of population being based on the concept of the community as explained in each of the regional volumes of this series. For example, a statement to the effect that the town communities include a certain population means that the stated population is the total population of the towns plus the population of their adjacent and constituent rural areas.

Fifth, the regional divisions used by the census are entirely different from those used by the survey.

Distribution of Population

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The 3,049 counties in the United States have in them 1,513 cities of more than 5,000 population which, together with the District of Columbia, include 46.8 per cent. of the total population of continental United States. The Colonial Region is the most overwhelmingly urban, with virtually 72 per cent. of its population in such cities. This is followed by the Pacific Region with 57 per cent. and the Middle West with 54 per cent. In no other region is the proportion as great as a third, varying from 23 per cent. in the South to 30 per cent. on the Range. In every region the urban population is a steadily increasing proportion of the total. The town and country population as defined in this survey aggregates 55,999,970 or 53.2 per cent. of the total population of continental United States.

The total number of communities within the town and country area is 73,230. Of these, 20,505 are strictly open country communities; that is, they are communities which do not include within their bounds any hamlet, village, or town. There are 52,725 centers of town and country population of sufficient importance to appear on a good standard map and having each a population of from 25 to 5,000. Of these, 1,322 are towns. Their average population is 3,464 and they include all told 8.2 per cent. of the town and country population. The villages number 16,981. They have an average population of 675 and include 20.5 per cent. of the total town and country population. The hamlets number 34,422, have an average population of 121, and include 7.4 per cent. of the total town and country population. This leaves an open country population of 35,793,333, or 63.9 per cent. of the total town and country population. This latter figure exceeds the total population living on farms within the town and country area, as reported by the census, by about four and a half millions. This excess may be regarded as accounted for by the scattered populations living outside of the centers of population on patches of land too small to be classified by the census as farms, or in the little cross-roads centers of less than 25 population, of which there is a very large number.

The towns follow the cities. They are relatively most important in those regions where the urban interest is the greatest. Thus the Colonial Region has 15 per cent. of its town and country population living in towns; and the Pacific Region has 13 per cent., as compared with the national average of 8 per cent. The strongholds of the village are the corn belt and the grain belt. The Middle

West, the Northwest and the Prairie Regions have proportionately the greatest number of villages; the South has the fewest. In the Colonial Region the villages have the highest average population and enroll a larger proportion of the town and country population than in any other region. This is owing to industry, not to agriculture. The hamlets have a rather uniform frequency. They are proportionately most numerous in the Southwest and least so in the Pacific and Southern Regions; but in the Colonial Region the hamlets, as was the case with the villages, have the largest average population and include the highest regional percentage of the total town and country population. The proportion of the open country population to the total town and country population varies widely by regions. It is highest in the South, where it is 73.4 per cent., and lowest in the Colonial Region, where it is 45.2 per cent.

Seven-tenths of all open country communities are in the South. The type of agriculture and the type of social life have combined to make for a multiplicity of small open country social units. In this region 46 per cent. of all the town and country communities are of the open country type. The Pacific Region is the only other region in which more than one-fourth of the communities are of this type. The Middle West has the fewest open country communities, representing only 8 per cent. of the total number of communities. Of all the town and country communities 1.8 per cent. center upon towns; 23.2 per cent. upon villages, and 47 per cent. upon hamlets, while 28 per cent. are strictly open country. The total open country population is, of course, not all resident within open country communities but is distributed among the various types of communities; and, in addition, a part of it is attached to the communities of cities of more than 5,000 population. Of the total open country population, 2.9 per cent. live within the bounds of town communities; 29.4 per cent. in village communities; 37.5 per cent. in hamlet communities; 22.4 per cent. in open country communities and 7.8 per cent. in city communities. These proportions, of course, vary by regions. Thus, in the South, 46 per cent. of the open country population is in open country communities, while in the Middle West less than 2 per cent. is in such communities.

On the average, 565 open country residents are included within each town community; 620 in each village community; 390 in each hamlet community and 391 in each open country community. Thus the total average population of a town community is 4,229; of a

village community 1,295; of a hamlet community 511 and of an open country community 391.

Of the total town and country population 10 per cent. is resident in town communities; 39.3 per cent. in village communities; 31.4 per cent. in hamlet communities; 14.3 per cent. in open country communities and 5 per cent. in city communities.

The Religious Situation [1]

The total number of town and country churches is 101,477. Of these, 5.6 per cent. are located in towns; 30.7 per cent. in villages; 63.7 per cent. in hamlets or in the open country. No distinction will be made between churches in hamlets and those in the open country and they will be together designated as country churches. The greatest preponderance of country churches is in the South which has more than one-half of the whole number; 83 per cent. of all the town and country churches in the South are in the country. At the other extreme is the Middle West, where more than three-fourths of the town and country churches are in villages.

Approximately one-seventh of all the town and country communities, including 9 per cent. of the town and country population, are without Protestant churches. There are 33,808 other communities, or 42 per cent. of the total number, that have churches but do not have within them any resident pastors. There are 16,258 other communities that have both churches and resident pastors, but which do not have in them any full-time resident pastors. Thus only 21 per cent. of all the communities, including 28 per cent. of all the town and country population, do have within their borders churches with full-time resident pastors. The Range has proportionately the largest number of communities without churches, more than half of its communities being so situated. The Pacific Region is next and the Northwest Region third. All the other regions are below the general average. The Middle West is the best supplied with churches, only 6 per cent. of its communities being without them.

Out of every ten town and country churches there are only three which do not have to share their pastors with other churches, and half of these have to share them with other occupations. Thus

[1] To a remarkable degree the estimates here set down tally not only with the 179 counties but with the total survey results of the Interchurch World Movement as tabulated for fifteen facts of major importance in the field of Town and Country.

only 15 per cent. of all town and country churches have full-time resident pastors. Twenty-six per cent. of the churches are on two-point circuits, 19 per cent. on three-point circuits and 25 per cent. on circuits of four points or more. This prevalence of the circuit system necessarily deprives most churches of the advantage of a resident pastor. In addition to the 15 per cent. having full-time resident pastors, only 18 per cent. have part-time resident pastors. Fifty-four per cent. have non-resident pastors and 13 per cent. are without pastors. There is a great difference between the town, village and country churches in the matter of pastoral service. Thus, three-fourths of the town churches have either full-time or part-time resident pastors, as compared with 61 per cent. of the village churches and only 16 per cent. of the country churches. The proportion of pastorless churches is about the same in each group. There is considerable difference regionally in these matters. In general, the highest proportion of churches with resident pastors is in the Prairie and Pacific Regions. The lowest proportion is in the South. There are similar variations in the proportion of churches on circuits.

The total membership of all town and country churches is 8,969,603, or 16 per cent. of the total town and country population. Seventy-one and three-tenths per cent. of these are classified as active resident members, that is, more than one-fourth are either non-resident or non-active. Eleven and five-tenths per cent. of those making up this membership are attached to town churches; 38.8 per cent. to village churches and 49.7 per cent. to country churches. The town and village churches, of course, include many members drawn from the country areas. The church members actually residing in towns represent 24.3 per cent. of the total town population; those residing in villages represent 22.8 per cent. of the total village population; those residing in the hamlets and the open country represent 13.1 per cent. of the total hamlet and open country population. This latter percentage is low primarily because most of the communities without churches are country communities. The country areas which are effectively served by churches generally show a higher proportion of their population in the church membership than do the villages and towns; but the country population as a whole is not so well evangelized as is the rest of the town and country population.

The town churches generally show a larger proportion of their membership classified as resident and active, and the country churches the lowest percentage. The figures are 75.7 per cent. for

town churches, 75.6 per cent. for village churches and 67.0 per cent. for the country churches. The town churches have an average net active membership of 144; the village churches of 84 and the country churches of 46. The general average is 63.

The total number of ministers serving town and country churches is 60,127. There are, therefore, 1.7 churches for every minister. Slightly less than two-thirds of this number give their full time to the ministry, the remainder combining the ministry with some other occupation such as teaching or farming. Of the total number of ministers 44.5 per cent. serve but one church each; 26.6 per cent. serve each two churches; 14.5 per cent., three churches; 14.4 per cent., four or more churches. It would require 34,181 more ministers giving their full time to the work of the ministry to provide one for each community if they were evenly distributed.

The average annual salary for all town and country ministers is $1,400. In arriving at this figure an allowance of $250 a year was made, in addition to the cash salary, where a parsonage was provided rent free, this sum being roughly equivalent to the rental value of the parsonage. On this basis the average salary can be stated as the equivalent of $1,150 cash and free use of house. The modal average is $50 higher than the arithmetical average. Practically 55 per cent. of all ministers are furnished with parsonages.

Of all town churches 88 per cent. have Sunday schools attached to them; 89 per cent. of all village churches have Sunday schools, and 67 per cent. of all country churches. There are in all 75,928 Sunday schools attached to churches. In addition, there are 2,165 separate Sunday schools or a total of 78,093 in all. In the Sunday schools which are attached to the churches the aggregate enrollment is approximately 6,500,000 or about 73 per cent. of the church membership. The total Sunday school enrollment of all Sunday schools is about 100,000 greater. The average enrollment of a town school is 173; of a village school, 103; of a country school, 64; the general average being 86. The average enrollment of separate Sunday schools is 48.

It appears, therefore, that there is still a great task of church extension in rural America. We need more churches, more Sunday schools, more ministers. This need is obviously related to our need of a better distribution of our existing church strength—of church organizations and ministerial personnel. There is need also for more effective methods of operation.

CHAPTER III

The General Status of the Church Enterprise

THIS chapter is limited to a consideration of the present status of the town and country church with respect to organization, leadership and membership, and to an analysis of the factors which seem to determine its degree of evangelistic success. This view of the church is accepted without minimizing in any way the importance of the church as a social and community institution, and especially without assuming that any statistical measurement of its influence can be regarded as a complete index of the importance of its contribution. Most people think of the church as an organization seeking members on certain conditions and for certain purposes. Even the church itself is apt to measure its success in relation to that effort.

The data for this study are drawn from 179 counties which are located in forty-four states and make up about 6 per cent. of all the agricultural counties in the United States. They have a total town and country population (exclusive of the Negro population of southern counties) of 2,572,335, living in 2,356 different communities. This is about 4.6 per cent. of the total town and country population of the United States. Thirteen per cent. of this population is to be found in towns, 26 per cent. in villages, and 61 per cent. in hamlets and the open country. For certain particulars, use will be made of detailed data drawn from the twenty-six counties which were more intensively surveyed. These twenty-six counties are thoroughly typical of the whole number, their averages in almost all items approximating the averages for the 179. There is every reason to assume that this body of data is reliably representative of conditions generally in the town and country areas of the United States as a whole.

Distribution of Churches and Ministers

Protestant Christianity is represented in these 179 counties by 5,552 churches (exclusive of colored churches) served by 3,353

ministers. The churches and ministers are distributed regionally as follows:

TABLE I

REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHURCHES BY TYPES OF COMMUNITIES

No. of Counties	*Region*	*Number of Churches*			
		Town	*Village*	*Country*	*Total*
20	Colonial	47	386	427	860
70	South	135	519	1,761	2,415
15	Southwest	15	92	183	290
10	Northwest ...	25	65	70	160
23	Middle West	102	398	646	1,146
2	Prairie	—	25	31	56
26	Range	42	133	100	275
13	Pacific	69	170	111	350
179	Total	435	1,788	3,329	5,552
	Per cent. of total number of churches....	7.8	32.2	60.	100.

TABLE II

REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF MINISTERS

Region	*Total No. of Churches*	*Total No. of Ministers*	*Ministers Giving Only Part Time*	
			No.	*Per Cent.*
Colonial	860	511	105	20.7
South	2,415	1,357	654	48.1
Southwest	290	169	83	49.1
Northwest	160	107	8	7.5
Middle West	1,146	714	164	23.
Prairie	56	43	12	27.9
Range	275	196	33	16.8
Pacific	350	256	45	17.6
Total	5,552	3,353	1,104	32.9

It is obvious at once that, assuming an equitable distribution of these churches, the counties studied are adequately churched. For the whole number of counties there is on the average one church for every 463 inhabitants. There is a wide variation, however, both between counties and between communities within the same county in church frequency. The open country communities have the most churches proportionately to their population, and the town communities have the fewest, the village and hamlet communities being about intermediate between the two extremes. In the total number of town and country churches per county, the variation is from one to 120. In town churches, for counties which contain towns, the variation is from one to eighteen. In village churches, for

counties which have villages, the variation is from zero to forty-five (five counties containing villages, all of them west of the Mississippi, have no village churches). In country churches, for counties which contain an open country population, as is the case with all but two or three of them, the variation is from zero to 117 (twelve counties which contain country populations have no country churches). In the proportion of churches to people, irrespective of location, the variation in county averages is from one church for every 163 to one church for 11,089. The average as above stated is one for every 463. The mode is one to every 251 to 500. The median is one church to 423 people.

The regional average varies from one church for 317 inhabitants in the South to one for every 1,219 in the Range. Four regions, the South, Prairie, Colonial, and Middle West, in that order have more churches in proportion to population than the average. Four regions, the Northwest, Southwest, Pacific, and Range, in that order, have fewer churches than the average. While there is a considerable variation within regions according to the different conditions obtaining in different counties, in general most of the counties within each region approach the regional average.

The ratio of churches to population varies materially according to the density of population. In general, the counties with the highest density of population tend to have the most churches per unit of population. Thus counties with a density not exceeding ten per square mile have one church per 701.

Counties with density	of 11–20	have 1 church	per 460
Counties with density	of 21–30	have 1 church	per 422
Counties with density	of 31–40	have 1 church	per 414
Counties with density	over 40	have 1 church	per 405

In part this tells the same story as the variations by regions, but not wholly. Four regions, the Range, Pacific, Prairie, and Southwest have a low average density of population, and they have on the average more people per church. The South, which has the most churches proportionately of any region, has its counties rather evenly distributed as far as density is concerned. Thirty-two out of the seventy counties surveyed in the South have a density of not more than twenty per square mile; but only seven counties out of seventy have on the average more than 500 people per church.

Too much significance should not be attached to relative density as a factor in church distribution, although it is a likely explanation in many cases. Perhaps 40 per cent. of the whole number of

counties depart more or less markedly from the rule suggested above, *i.e.,* their actual proportion of churches to people varies sharply from the proportion of the group to which they belong by reason of population density.

It is probable that neither density of population nor relative economic prosperity offers any final satisfactory explanation of the variation in the proportionate number of churches. There would seem to be a number of different factors which have to be taken into consideration, of which the most important are these:

(a) *The membership strength of non-evangelical churches,* chiefly, so far as the counties surveyed are concerned, the Roman Catholic Church, and the Church of the Latter Day Saints. This non-evangelical membership is relatively strongest in the Range, the Colonial area, the Southwest and the Pacific, and after them in the Middle West and the Northwest. A strong non-evangelical membership tends to reduce the proportionate number of Protestant churches by reducing the number of their potential constituency.

(b) *Sharpness of differences between Protestant denominations,* and the degree of denominational rivalry existing. This is a factor in all areas, but it is most developed in the South, the Colonial area and the Middle West. An intensity of denominational rivalry tends to increase the proportionate number of Protestant churches.

(c) *The frequency and the average size of the community units,* plus such factors as the condition of the roads and the general ease of communication. Thus the South has on the average more communities and smaller communities per unit of population. There is a greater tenacity to neighborhood life. The Colonial and Middle West areas are comparable to the South in this matter. The restriction of the community unit and the development of neighborhood life tend to increase the proportionate number of churches.

(d) *Where the density of population approaches the extreme in either direction* it operates more invariably to affect the number of churches. For example, a very sparse population has difficulty in assembling at any point enough people to establish and maintain a church. The possibilities of duplication of churches are reduced and the areas which have no churches at all are more extended. On the other hand, the concentration of a large number of people within a small area makes their division along the lines of their denominational preference easier and reduces the areas which are unsupplied with churches.

(e) *Factors inherent in the religious traditions* of the section

have a direct importance. Thus in the South and in parts of the Colonial and Middle West areas the religious tradition has established many small churches, frequently putting churches of the same denomination near together and developing an extensive circuit system. Such a practice inevitably tends to increase the proportionate number of churches.

(f) *In those sections where the church is more securely established* and where it is most deeply rooted in the affections of the people, as in the South and in the Colonial and Middle West areas, probably in that order, there tend to be more churches proportionately.

(g) It is not apparent that the economic factor has any directly traceable effect in most places on the number of churches. Certainly in the older parts of the country it has not operated to retard the rate of their establishment. It almost appears, in many districts, that the fewer churches a county is economically able to afford the more it is apt to have; but the reasons for that are not the economic reasons. In the newer parts of the country, however, the economic factor undoubtedly has had some effect in determining the rate of church establishment.

While it is obvious that there are, taking everything into account, an ample number of churches adequately to serve the entire population of these 179 counties, their distribution geographically leaves a good deal to be desired. Some years ago a consensus of opinion was obtained among rural church leaders as to the ideal ratio of churches to population, and the ratio of one church to every 1,000 people was agreed upon as the norm. It has already been noted that in these counties as a whole the average, the mode, and the median are all far removed from that norm, there being more than twice as many churches as that ratio would require. Only six counties out of the 179, in fact, approximate the norm, *i.e.*, have an average number of persons per church that comes within a hundred of the suggested average one way or the other. Twenty-seven counties have, by a margin of more than 100 persons, more people per church than the norm, and 146 have fewer people per church. One hundred and eight counties, or 60 per cent. of the whole number, have more than twice as many churches, and twenty-seven, or 15 per cent., have more than four times as many churches as this suggested standard calls for. On the other hand, seven counties are undeniably underchurched. These all have more than 3,000 persons for every Protestant church, and they are all counties with a low density of population, which means a widely scattered popu-

lation which would really require more churches than the average for adequate service.

Further, in counties with an ample number of churches, if they were properly distributed, there are often many communities which contain no Protestant churches and whose people do not live within convenient access to one. These underchurched communities are usually, though not always, comparatively small and isolated. Fifty-five per cent. of the counties have each one such community or more. Their total number is 467, or almost exactly one-fifth of the whole number of town and country communities, and they contain 7.7 per cent. of all the town and country population. These communities are found in all the regions, but the Middle West has relatively the fewest, and the Range relatively the most. The number and per cent. of communities and the per cent. of all town and country population without Protestant churches is shown by regions in the following table:

TABLE III

COMMUNITIES WITHOUT PROTESTANT CHURCHES

Region	*Number*	*Per cent. of All Communities*	*Per cent. of Town and Country Population*
Colonial	30	7.5	2.3
South	123	14.5	4.8
Southwest	13	13.5	7.1
Northwest	29	29.6	7.6
Middle West	21	6.1	2.1
Prairie	3	13.0	8.1
Range	156	52.0	22.3
Pacific	92	37.2	10.4
Total	467	19.9	7.7

Twelve counties with an aggregate country population of 68,674 have no country churches whatsoever. With one exception these counties are all in the Range or in west Texas. They are all counties in which the church is very insecurely established. Probably the country population in them is not served much less adequately than the town or village population. Five counties with an aggregate village population of 19,415, have no village churches. Two of these are on the Range, two in west Texas, and one is in the Ozarks; and they also are counties in which the church has rather a low estate. It appears, therefore, that there is still a considerable task of church extension in rural America.

These 5,552 churches are served by 3,353 ministers, an average

of nearly 1.7 churches per minister, and of one minister for every 767 people. Nearly one-third of all the ministers combine some other occupation with the work of the ministry, the proportion varying from 7.5 per cent. in the Northwest to nearly 50 per cent. in the South and Southwest. (See Table No. II on page 45.) The following computations are on the basis of the whole number of ministers. There is a similar variation by counties and regions in the proportionate number of ministers to population as of churches; and it follows much the same line, but with this qualification—the general tendency is for the supply of ministers to be relatively greater as the supply of churches is relatively less. That is to say, as the proportion of churches to population becomes smaller, the proportion of ministers to population moves in the same direction but at a lower rate, and the number of churches and the number of ministers approach nearer to a parity. This may be illustrated by dividing the counties into four groups; those which have 250 persons or fewer per church, of which there are twenty-seven; those with 251-500 persons per church, of which there are eighty-one; those with 501-750 persons per church, of which there are twenty-six; and those with more than 750 persons per church, of which there are forty-five. The results are shown in the following table:

TABLE IV

PROPORTION OF MINISTERS TO POPULATION COMPARED WITH PROPORTION OF MINISTERS TO CHURCHES

	Counties Having a Population of			
Average	*250 or Fewer Per Church*	*251–500 Per Church*	*501–750 Per Church*	*Over 750 Per Church*
Population per church	200	357	571	1,215
Index No.	100	178	285	607
Population per minister	366	618	863	1,617
Index No.	100	169	236	442
Churches per minister	1.8	1.7	1.5	1.3

It will be noted that whereas the ratio of churches to population in the groups at the two extremes shows a contrast as of 607 to 100 (as indicated by the index numbers), the ratio of ministers to population in the same groups shows a contrasting ratio as of 442 to 100. The proportion of ministers to churches increases as the proportion of churches to people decreases. The proportion of ministers to people decreases as the proportion of churches to people decreases, but at a much slower rate.

The same tendency may be differently shown by regions.

TABLE V

REGIONAL COMPARISON OF NUMBER OF PERSONS PER CHURCH AND PER MINISTER

Region	*Average Number of Persons Per Church*	*Average Number of Persons Per Minister*	*Average Number of Churches Per Minister*
Colonial	434	730	1.7
South	317	564	1.8
Southwest	592	1,016	1.7
Northwest	568	850	1.5
Middle West ...	447	718	1.6
Prairie	384	500	1.3
Range	1,209	1,697	1.4
Pacific	872	1,193	1.4
Total.....	463	767	1.7

In part at least this tendency may be accounted for by the fact that a relatively small number of churches generally argues a scattered population, so that churches of the same denomination are apt to be more widely spaced. This increases the difficulty of forming circuits and necessitates a larger number of single-point charges. In part this illustrates an economic fact. It is easier and cheaper to maintain a church than it is to maintain a pastor. No economic pressure can effectively retard multiplication of churches where there are other factors at work to bring about such multiplication; but economic pressure obviously can, and does, limit the number of ministers who can be supported. The fact that in some areas the minister is a less important element in the church's work than in others, reduces the apparent disadvantages of establishing a church for which no minister can be supplied, and has had an important effect. In many counties of the Middle West, Prairie, and Pacific regions, general prosperity seems chiefly responsible for the large proportionate number of ministers, these being our most prosperous agricultural counties with the highest average farm values and the largest average farm incomes.

The variations in the proportion of ministers to churches by counties are much sharper than are the regional averages. The proportion ranges all the way from one church per minister to four churches per minister:

9 counties having in all 31 churches have 1 minister for every church. This is the best record for the whole number of counties.

7 counties having in all 138 churches and 125 ministers average 1.10 churches per minister.

At the other extreme,

10 counties having in all 442 churches and 158 ministers average 2.6 churches or more per minister.
1 small county has 4 churches, and a single minister.
Only 1 county of the 179 is without a minister working within its bounds.

One county in every seven substantially exceeds the national average of the number of churches to the number of ministers.

Approximately one-sixth of all churches have full-time resident pastors. The town and village churches greatly excel the country churches in this particular. Nineteen per cent. of the churches have part-time resident pastors; 52.6 per cent. have non-resident ministers; 11.9 per cent. have no minister. The marked variation in these ratios by regions has more than passing significance.

TABLE VI

DISTRIBUTION OF MINISTERS

	Proportion of Churches Having			
Region	*Full-time Resident Minister Per Cent.*	*Part-time Resident Minister Per Cent.*	*Non-Resident Minister Per Cent.*	*No Minister Per Cent.*
Colonial	25.0	23.1	36.4	15.5
South	6.1	15.1	69.7	9.1
Southwest	10.7	16.2	54.1	19.0
Northwest	24.4	26.9	40.0	8.7
Middle West	19.2	21.5	46.6	12.7
Prairie	35.7	14.3	39.3	10.7
Range	37.1	25.5	24.0	13.4
Pacific	41.7	21.1	22.9	14.3
Total	16.5	19.0	52.6	11.9

The significance of these variations is partly in relation to the relative frequency of churches and ministers, partly in relation to economic well-being, and partly in relation to prevailing standards of church work. The South illustrates each of these phases of the question admirably. This area, relatively speaking, uses more "toiler preachers" than any other section, ministers who make part or all of their livelihood by following some other occupation. This greatly reduces the economic overhead. Consequently, although the South has the most churches in proportion to population and is by no means the best able financially to support them, comparatively few of these churches are listed as without ministers. Undoubtedly a great many more of them would be pastorless if they had to employ ministers on anything like a full-time wage. Furthermore, the circuit system is much more extended in the South among all de-

nominations than it is elsewhere, this development being facilitated by the fact that churches are numerous, small and close together. The prevailing type of church work places less stress on the need of the resident minister. More churches are accustomed to having public service on only one or two Sundays a month. Social and educational aspects of the churches' programs are less emphasized. In consequence, very few churches have full-time resident ministers. They are able to exist and hold the loyalty of their people by other means. On the other hand, the situation in the Range and Pacific regions is almost exactly opposite. Here where the church has a precarious foothold and has to struggle for its mere existence, the opportunities of combining churches are fewer and the demands for resident leadership are more insistent.

In general, the fewer churches there are in proportion to the population the larger the proportion of them which have resident pastors, and also the larger the proportion which are without any minister. It comes nearer to being a choice between a resident minister and no minister at all. That is to say, from the point of view of the effective distribution of the supply of ministers, an area which is overchurched is apt to be, relatively at least, under-ministered; and an area which is underchurched is apt to have the compensating advantage of a more nearly adequate supply of ministers.

The great advantage of the town over the village, and of both over the country, in the matter of resident pastors is a characteristic of all regions and of virtually all counties. Thus, while seventy-eight out of every hundred town churches have resident pastors, sixty out of every hundred village churches have resident pastors, but only seventeen out of every hundred country churches have them. Less than five out of every hundred country churches have full-time resident pastors.

The Pacific region makes the best record in the proportion of churches having full-time resident pastors. The South makes the poorest record. For town churches the best record in the matter of resident pastors, whether full-time or part-time, is made in the Range, where 93 per cent. have resident pastors, the others being vacant. The Pacific and Northwest are next in order, with 88 per cent.; the Southwest is last with 60 per cent. The largest proportion of pastorless town churches is in the Southwest, 27 per cent. The other regions vary in this particular from 4 per cent. to 13 per cent.

For village churches the highest proportion with resident pas-

tors, whether full-time or part-time, is in the Prairie, 76 per cent., with the Range, Colonial, Pacific, Northwest, and Middle West regions following closely in that order. The South is the one region in which the proportion drops below one-half. The Southwest again has the largest proportion of pastorless village churches, 17 per cent. being in this category. The Pacific is a close second, with 16 per cent.

For country churches, no region makes a very good record in the matter of full-time resident pastors. The Pacific and the Range regions lead, and they have fewer than one out of every five churches so provided, whereas the South has only four country churches in a thousand with full-time resident pastors. As concerns resident pastors, whether full-time or part-time, the Pacific makes the best record with 43 per cent. The Range is second, and after it the Prairie, Northwest and Colonial regions are closely grouped. The South is at the bottom of the list, having less than one church in ten provided with a resident pastor. The largest proportion of pastorless country churches is in the Colonial region, where more than one-fifth are without pastors. The Southwest is a close second, and the Pacific a close third. In virtually two-thirds of the counties having country churches there is none with a full-time resident pastor, and in approximately one-fourth there is none with any resident pastor at all. In the South only six out of seventy counties contain country churches which have full-time resident pastors, while more than one-third of the counties are without any resident pastors in the country.

The records by counties as to pastoral service offer some illuminating contrasts which illustrate the great variations in the effectiveness of church organization. Out of the sixty-seven counties which contain towns, ten make a perfect score, having every town church provided with a full-time resident pastor. The largest number in any one county is in Stanislaus County, California, where there are eleven town churches with full-time resident pastors. At the other extreme we find Jennings County, Indiana, where no one of seven town churches has a full-time resident pastor; and Pasco County, Florida, with only three for seventeen churches.

There are 177 counties which include villages; six of these counties have a perfect score, but they have only one or two village churches each. The best records are made in Mercer County, New Jersey, where thirteen village churches out of fifteen have full-time resident pastors, and Carroll County, New Hampshire, with eleven out of sixteen. In forty-six of these counties no village church has

a full-time minister. Telfair County, Georgia, should be accorded the lowest mark, since it has fourteen village churches, no one of which has a full-time resident pastor.

So far as country churches are concerned, only one county of the whole number has a perfect score; but this county contains only one country church. The best record is made in Sheboygan County, Wisconsin, where just half of the churches, or fifteen out of thirty, have full-time resident pastors. There is no other county that approaches very near to this record. On the other end of the scale it is difficult fairly to assign the honor of having the poorest record among the 105 counties having country churches in which there is no full-time resident minister. The largest number of country churches in any one of these counties is in Ashe, North Carolina, with 117 country churches. County records, which are so poor as to be especially noteworthy, include the following: Ashe, North Carolina, with 117 country churches, has ninety-seven served by non-resident pastors and two without pastors. Carroll County, Georgia, with seventy-two country churches, has sixty-six with non-resident pastors and two which are pastorless. Calhoun County, Alabama, shows only two resident pastors in fifty-six country churches. Columbia County, Pennsylvania, shows one resident pastor for fifty-five country churches. In Northampton County, Pennsylvania, every one of the fifty country churches has a non-resident pastor. In Carroll County, New Hampshire, nineteen country churches out of thirty-four are pastorless; while in Waldo, Maine, twenty-one out of thirty-seven are pastorless. There are four counties, two in the South and two in the Southwest, in which there is no minister resident, whether serving town, village, or country churches. In like manner there are twenty-five counties, nineteen in the South, three in the Southwest and three in the Middle West, in which there is no minister resident who gives his full time to a single church.

Of the whole number of churches which have ministers, whether resident or non-resident, 31 per cent. have ministers who serve but a single point, though some of them have other occupations. Twenty-five per cent. have ministers serving two points each; 19 per cent. serving three points each; 25 per cent., four or more points each. In this particular also the town has the advantage over the village, and both hold advantage over the country. The proportion of all churches whose ministers serve but one point is for town, village, and open country churches respectively 68 per cent., 43 per cent., and 19 per cent. In like manner the proportion

of those whose ministers serve four or more points each is for town churches 5 per cent., for village churches 16 per cent., and for country churches 32 per cent.

The regional averages are not for the most part as different in these particulars as they were in the matter of resident pastors. The best record for town churches is made in the Colonial and the Range regions, where 77 per cent. have ministers serving one point only. The Northwest has the lowest record, 62.5 per cent. This is the only region in which any considerable proportion of the town churches have ministers who serve more than two points. This situation obtained in one-sixth of the churches of the region. For village churches the best record is in the Prairie, where nearly three-fourths of the churches have ministers serving one point only, and in no case does the minister of a village church serve more than three points. The Northwest and the South make the poorest records, particularly the South, where only 27 per cent. of the village churches have full-time ministers, whereas the churches that share their ministers with at least three other churches make up 31 per cent. of the total number. For country churches the best record is in the Pacific region, with the Prairie and the Range in second and third places respectively. The Northwest and Southwest are again last, the Southwest showing 42 per cent. of its country churches on circuits of four or more points.

Stating the same thing from the point of view of the ministers, it may be noted that 45 per cent. of the ministers serve single churches. Twenty-five per cent. serve two points, 15 per cent. three points, 15 per cent. four or more points each. Thus seven-tenths of the churches have each only a part of a minister, while more than half of the ministers must each attempt to do more than one man's work. Our system of church distribution has been built upon the principle of sending a part of a man to do a whole man's job. Rather curiously there is no appreciable difference in the average number of points served by the ministers giving full-time to their ministry and those who have other occupations. This does not hold uniformly for all regions, though the variations are not very great. In the South and Southwest the proportion of ministers with another occupation, who serve each a single church, is considerably greater than the corresponding proportion of ministers giving full-time to the ministry, which is, of course, what one would naturally expect. In the Prairie and the Range the reverse is true. Elsewhere the difference between the two groups is not greater than 5 per cent.

Reference has already been made to the fact that one-fifth of

all the communities in these counties, with 7.7 per cent. of the population, have no Protestant churches within their bounds. Thirty-seven per cent. of the communities, with 29.2 per cent. of the population, in 159 different counties, have churches but no resident ministers. Thus in more than one-half of the communities with more than a third of the population there is no minister resident. In addition, more than one-fifth of the whole number of communities, with one-quarter of the population, have no full-time resident pastor. Thus only about one-fifth of the communities, with 38 per cent. of the population, have full-time resident pastors. In the South only 8 per cent. of the communities have such pastors, this being the poorest regional record in this particular. In the Range, however, seven-tenths of the communities have no resident pastor at all; the reason being, of course, the relatively small number of churches. In no one of the regions do half the communities have full-time resident pastors, although in all regions but the South and Southwest more than half the population is in communities which have such pastors. The best record here is made in the Pacific region, where only 22.5 per cent. of the population live in communities without full-time resident pastors.

Church Membership

The total membership of the Protestant churches in these counties is 516,310, which is almost exactly 20 per cent. of the total town and country population. Sixteen per cent. of this membership is attached to town churches, 37 per cent. to village churches and 47 per cent. to country churches. Both town and village churches, however, enroll members who live in the country, and therefore the proportion of the membership who are country residents considerably exceeds the proportion of those who belong to country churches. Thus 14 per cent. of the membership reside in towns, 29 per cent. in villages, and 57 per cent. in the country. The average church enrolls ninety-three members. The town churches are by a wide margin the largest, averaging 194 members each; the village churches come next with an average of 108, while the country churches average seventy-two.

All types of churches carry on their rolls a considerable number of members who are either non-resident, or if resident, are inactive, in that they do not either support the church or attend its services. Only 72.5 per cent. of the total membership was classified by the churches themselves as resident and active. The town churches

make the best record, with 76.5 per cent. of their total membership resident and active; the village churches are next with 75 per cent., and the country churches have 69 per cent. The town churches average 148 resident members, the village churches eighty-one, and the country churches sixty-seven. In only one region, the Prairie, are the resident active members more than four-fifths of the total. In four of the regions the proportion is above three-fourths. The South has the poorest record, more than a third of its membership being classified as either non-resident or inactive. Both its country and its village churches are at the bottom of the list in the regional averages, its town churches being third from the last. The Middle West has the best record for town churches, the Range for village churches and the Prairie for country churches.

The non-evangelical church membership is a variable factor in these counties. It cannot be accurately measured for the town and country areas since the survey itself was not able to secure trustworthy data in all cases for non-evangelical churches. Recourse, therefore, must be had to the 1916 United States Religious Census. It is not possible to segregate out of the census figures the totals for the town and country area, since the tabulation was by counties, and many of these counties include cities, which were excluded in the Town and Country Survey. The total population of these counties is much larger than the town and country population, and the total white Protestant church membership is nearly double that reported for the churches studied in this survey. It is likely that the proportion of non-evangelical membership is higher than it would be for the town and country areas only, since it is obvious that in part at least of this area the non-evangelical churches are stronger in the city than they are in the country. This would not, of course, be uniformly true. The exact opposite is probably the case with the Mormon church, and possibly also in areas where there is a considerable Spanish-speaking population. The census returns for these same counties are, however, suggestive even if they do not give a wholly accurate representation of the town and country situation. Non-evangelical membership is an important factor in every region except the South, where it is almost negligible. The Range counties are predominantly non-evangelical, only one-fifth of the total church membership being Protestant. Nearly 60 per cent. are adherents of the Church of the Latter Day Saints. This proportion would not hold throughout the Range, as it is likely that the number of Utah counties, in which that church dominates the situation, is disproportionately high. The Roman Catholic membership reported is, how-

ever, almost equal to the Protestant. Outside of the Range the non-evangelical strength is almost entirely Catholic. The Catholic membership exceeds the Protestant in the Colonial counties and almost equals it in the Pacific and Southwest counties. It is approximately one-third of the total in the Middle West and Northwest and about one-fifth in the Prairie. For the 179 counties as a whole the Catholic membership is almost exactly one-half the Protestant membership.

The Evangelization of the Community

By evangelization is meant the effort of the Church definitely to enroll individuals in its membership. Here is an obvious test of church success which, while not necessarily of exclusive or final importance, is nevertheless fundamental in its implications. A church does many things besides recruit members. Doubtless there are better tests than membership of the degree of loyalty to the church which exists within its community at any particular time. Membership does not so sensitively register the changes in the spiritual attitudes and interests of people. Attendance, for example, or church support is a better barometer, but the church which really lays hold upon the affections and loyalties of its people, which effectively implants itself in the life of its community, will almost inevitably show the effect of that mutual attachment in its membership. In a declining church it is likely that interest and activity decrease more rapidly than the membership, and in a newly vitalized church doubtless the reverse is true. But on the average the success of the church in recruiting members is a reasonably accurate gauge of the general effectiveness of its work over a period of years.

It was noted in the discussion of membership that the aggregate membership of the town and country churches was one-fifth of the total town and country population. The national average, however, has rather less significance in this particular than with reference to any other phase of church work. Certainly there is no aspect of this whole inquiry which discloses variations from the national average by regions, counties and communities which are so extreme and so significant. Regional averages more nearly approximate the real situation than does a national average. The county averages come still closer to it, yet every county shows within itself a wide range of variation in church effectiveness. We have to come down to communities or even neighborhoods before we really see how uneven is the success of the church in town and country areas.

The regional averages do, however, show at once those areas in which the Protestant church is the least securely rooted. The Range and those sections of the Southwest, Northwest and Pacific which are adjacent to it and are most like unto it, are the areas where the greatest unfinished task of the town and country church is found. Here for the most part the Church has not struck its roots in very deeply. There are vast stretches of territory where it has hardly made its influence felt at all. On the other hand, it is in the South that the Church has the greatest hold on the affections of its people. Poorly organized, poorly manned and poorly equipped, the country church in the South has yet a stronger hold upon the life of its people than in any other region. The Church in the South attains a relatively high degree of success in the face of handicaps which would spell failure in almost any other section. The difference between the South and the other regions is not statistical but temperamental and spiritual. For the rest the Colonial, Middle West and Prairie regions show a degree of success above the average, while the Northwest, Southwest, Pacific and Range fall way below the average.

TABLE VII

PROPORTION OF TOTAL TOWN AND COUNTRY POPULATION IN MEMBERSHIP OF (WHITE) PROTESTANT CHURCHES

	Per Cent.
Colonial	21.2
South	28.3
Southwest	12.6
Northwest	16.6
Middle West	24.3
Prairie	22.7
Range	6.6
Pacific	10.7
Combined Average	20.0

The variations by individual counties in the proportion of their population enrolled in church membership are much greater than the variations by regions, ranging from four-tenths of one per cent. to 57.6 per cent. Within each region there is a considerable variation. This is notably true in the South which, with many counties showing the highest proportion of church membership, comes perilously near having also counties with the poorest records. In most cases these marked variations follow rather closely lines of economic or racial differences. Thus in the South the counties which have the poorest record are either in Louisiana, with a large French Creole population, or in certain newly industrialized mountain counties like

Harlan County, Kentucky, into which there has come within recent years a large foreign-speaking population. For the country as a whole slightly more than one-fourth of all the counties have less than one-tenth of their population in their church membership. Every region contributes to this quota, but three-fourths of these counties are in the western third of the United States. Nearly one-third of all of the counties have more than 30 per cent. of their population in their church membership. Only the Prairie, Range and Pacific regions do not contribute to this quota, but about three-fourths of these counties are in the South. Only eight counties show church memberships which represent one-half or more of their total populations, and all of these are in the South. These variations by counties are shown with more detail in the following table:

TABLE VIII

PROPORTION OF POPULATION IN CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

		Number of Counties Having					
Region	*Total No. of Counties*	*Less Than 5 Per Cent.*	*5-10 Per Cent.*	*11-20 Per Cent.*	*21-30 Per Cent.*	*31-40 Per Cent.*	*Over 40 Per Cent.*
Colonial	20	—	1	11	5	3	—
South	70	—	3	15	11	19	22
Southwest	15	3	5	4	1	2	—
Northwest	10	—	4	4	1	1	—
Middle West ...	23	2	3	3	6	8	1
Prairie	2	1	—	—	1	—	—
Range	26	12	8	6	—	—	—
Pacific	13	1	4	7	1	—	—
Total	179	19	28	50	26	33	23
Per Cent. of Total No. of Counties		10.6	15.7	27.9	14.5	18.4	12.9

Variations by communities are more general and greater in extent than the variations by counties, even in counties having a high average percentage of evangelization. The reasons for this cannot with any degree of assurance be analyzed or reduced to rule. These variations are affected by differences in history and tradition, in qualities of leadership, in social and ethical standards, in physical and economic factors united in various combinations with measurable, objective differences in the number and efficiency of church organizations. In their general course these variations follow lines similar to those in the variations by counties. For example, the division of the communities by regions into groups according to the percentage of population in church membership would be similar to the distribu-

tion of the counties on the same basis. The extremes, of course, are farther apart among the communities than among the counties, ranging all the way from communities which report no church membership to communities which actually report more members than they have population.

The factors which seem most significantly to accompany these variations in community evangelism (one could hardly say with assurance that are responsible for them) are the following:

I. For the country as a whole, and for every region, it may be said that the town and village population is apt to be more thoroughly evangelized than the country population. This needs to be qualified very carefully not to be misunderstood. It is discussed in much greater detail in another chapter. As is there shown, the country communities which are adequately churched make the best showing in evangelistic results, as a class excelling both the town and village communities. But of the entire country population a smaller proportion is enrolled in the churches than of the entire town and village population. The difference is frequently striking. For the whole number of counties the variation is not wide, but it is wide enough to be significant. For example, 21 per cent. of all the town residents and 23 per cent. of all the village residents are church members; but less than 19 per cent. of all the country residents. That is to say, the number of country people who are church members is only about 82 per cent. of what it would be if the country population were reached by the churches as well as the village population is reached. This makes a difference in the total membership drawn from the country population in these counties of about 63,000 members, which would add about one-eighth to their total church membership.

The weakness of the Church in reaching the country population may be attributed, generally speaking, to two factors in addition to those which are apt to be present in any type of community. The one is the considerable number of country people who live in isolated communities or in sparsely settled areas where perhaps there are no churches at all. The other is the fact elsewhere discussed that the country people in the vicinity of towns of any considerable size are not, generally speaking, well reached by the town churches, and are not able to maintain strong country churches in competition with the town churches. This lesser degree of success of the Church in reaching country people may be seen by the fact that in 84 per cent. of those counties which contain towns, the percentage of evangelization of town population exceeds the county average; in two-thirds

of the counties containing villages, the percentage of evangelization of the village population exceeds the county average; but in only 18 per cent. of the counties does the percentage of evangelization of the country population exceed the county average. Reversing the statement, in 12 per cent. of the counties the rate of town evangelization falls markedly below the county average. In 22 per cent. the rate of village evangelization falls markedly below the county average, whereas in 56 per cent. of the counties the rate of country evangelization is markedly below the county average.

The distribution of the counties according to the proportion of town, village and country population respectively which is enrolled in the church membership, is set forth in the following table:

TABLE IX

PER CENT. OF TOTAL NUMBER OF COUNTIES SHOWING SPECIFIED PROPORTION OF TOWN, VILLAGE OR COUNTRY POPULATION ENROLLED IN CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

	Percentage of Population			
	Less Than 10	*10–20*	*21–40*	*Over 40*
Town	20.9	31.3	34.3	13.5
Village	22.0	25.4	41.9	10.7
Country	39.7	28.5	30.1	1.7
Total	26.8	27.4	32.9	12.9

While this contrast holds for all regions and for most counties, it is least marked in the Colonial area and in the South, although there are forces at work in those two areas which almost inevitably tend in this direction. Only one county out of 179, Salem County, New Jersey, has more than 50 per cent. of its country population enrolled in the Church. Of course, individual counties vary from the regional averages in these respects as in all others, but the variations are for the most part within narrow limits and are at substantially the same rate for town, village and country population. The extreme range of variation by counties in the proportion of town population enrolled in church membership is eight-tenths of 1 per cent. to 69 per cent. For the evangelization of village population it is from 0 per cent. to 92 per cent. For evangelization of country population it is from three-tenths of 1 per cent. to 74 per cent.

II. The relative frequency of churches and ministers in proportion to population varies with the proportion of population in the church membership; that is to say, the higher the proportion of the population in church membership, the greater the number of churches and ministers in proportion to population. It does not seem possible

to say whether or not there is a relation of cause and effect between these two things, and if there is, which is the cause and which is the effect. It is quite as likely that a more intense church loyalty, combined as it usually is with strong denominational feeling, should increase the number of churches and hence of ministers, and that an increased number of churches and ministers should inevitably increase the total proportion of the population reached, as that the reverse should be true. Probably each factor is to a certain extent both cause and effect. The relationship here, however, may be illustrated by a community-by-community analysis of twenty-five counties, which is given below.

TABLE X

EVANGELIZATION IN RELATION TO NUMBER OF CHURCHES AND MINISTERS

Communities with Specified Per Cent. of Population in Church Membership	*Average Number Persons in Population*	
	Per Church	*Per Resident Minister*
Less than 10 per cent.	616	1,599
10–24 per cent.	479	980
25–34 per cent.	418	885
35 per cent. or over.....	250	644

For the same four groups of communities, in the order in which they are set down in Table X, the average number of churches per minister is respectively 1.27, 2.16, 3.27, 2.62. The percentage of churches which have resident ministers does not have any consistent or demonstrable relation to the proportion of population reached. In certain counties the proportions seem to vary together; but the South, with the lowest percentage of churches having resident ministers, has the highest percentage of evangelization.

III. Any unusual racial or physical or economic situation is likely to have a clearly demonstrable effect upon evangelization. Thus a large number of foreign-speaking or of non-evangelical peoples, an exceedingly broken topography, making even settlement and easy intercommunication impossible, or an unusually low degree of economic well-being will almost inevitably reduce the proportion of the population enrolled in the church membership.

We may take for example the forty-eight counties, which enroll 10 per cent. or less of their population in the church membership. Thirty-three of the forty-eight are unmistakably frontier counties in all of their characteristics. They have new settlements, large areas which are either very sparsely settled or as yet largely unde-

veloped, religious and social institutions very insecurely established, and social and religious traditions hardly formed. Twenty-three of these thirty-three have also each a large non-evangelical population, chiefly either Spanish-speaking or Mormon. Of the other fifteen counties, in seven there are very large non-evangelical populations, chiefly of foreign extraction. Others are economically and socially retarded. This leaves only five of the forty-eight in which an explanation of the low degree of evangelization is at all difficult to find. Doubtless in these cases the differences are traditional and temperamental, and are in other ways not easily subject to analysis. On the other hand, of course, it does not necessarily follow that wide-spread economic prosperity, or even a high degree of social progress will necessarily be accompanied by correspondingly good records in the matter of evangelization. Factors such as those named above function as limiting or retarding influences. Their absence does not guarantee church success, but simply removes obstacles from the path of church success.

IV. Finally, the relation of the Church to the problem of farm tenancy has a clear effect upon its success. The Church in the country areas is not, generally speaking, the church of the landless man. It does not reach the tenant as well as it reaches the farm owner. Tenantry being a large factor in the agricultural life of many of these counties, as it is throughout large areas of the United States, the failure of the Church in this particular has important and far-reaching implications. The general situation by regions is shown in table No. XI.

TABLE XI

PERCENTAGE OF FARM TENANTS AND FARM OWNERS WHO ARE CHURCH MEMBERS, BY REGIONS

Region	*Per Cent. of All Farm Owners Who Are Church Members*	*Per Cent. of All Farm Tenants Who Are Church Members*	*Per Cent. of All Farmers Who Are Tenants*	*Per Cent. of All Farmers in Church Membership Who Are Tenants*
Colonial	23.7	26.9	15.9	18.1
South	59.5	33.5	38.5	26.5
Southwest	26.2	9.2	43.9	21.7
Northwest	16.4	7.4	30.3	16.7
Middle West	47.9	20.3	28.9	15.0
Prairie	55.6	15.8	47.5	20.8
Range	7.4	10.0	18.8	24.3
Pacific	16.5	11.5	16.3	12.4
Combined averages	36.1	23.2	25.8	21.6

It will be noted from the above table that in only three regions, the Colonial, the Range and the Pacific, does the Church have approximately the same degree of success in reaching the farm tenants as in reaching farm owners. All of these are regions in which the percentage of tenantry on the farms is comparatively low, and two of them are regions in which the Church has no very conspicuous success in reaching any type of farmer, either owner or tenant. In all other regions the discrepancy shown between the percentages in the first two columns, and also between those in the last two columns is sharply marked.

Another fact of importance is illustrated here, namely, that the larger the proportion of tenants on the farm the greater is their relative handicap with reference to the Church. Generally speaking, the counties here included which have a large percentage of tenantry are counties in the Middle West, Prairie and South, where the Church is also generally well established in the affections of the people. There are many churches in these counties widely distributed and apparently in a better initial position to reach those elements in the population which are difficult of access than would be the case in other regions. For this reason the contrasts shown in the appended table are of the utmost importance, showing as they do that a community may be a good church community and a church may be a good farmers' church, and yet the landless man may be conspicuously unreached.

Table XII

PERCENTAGE OF FARM TENANTS AND FARM OWNERS WHO ARE CHURCH MEMBERS (175 COUNTIES)

Per Cent. of Tenancy in Counties	*No. of Counties*	*Average Per Cent. of Tenancy*	*Per Cent. of Farmers Who Are Church Members*			*Ratio of Tenant Church Members to All Farmer Church Members* [2]
			All [1]	*Owners*	*Tenants*	
0–10	28	6.8	13.6	13.7	12.4	91.2
11–25	56	17.1	25.7	26.8	19.8	77.7
26–50	62	35.9	39.4	48.2	23.6	61.3
Over 50	29	57.2	40.9	63.6	23.9	58.6

[1] High tenantry counties are also counties in which, generally speaking, the church is most securely established, and hence in a better position to reach tenants.

[2] This column gives the ratio of column 6 to column 4. It shows the degree of success in reaching tenants as compared with farm owners.

The column on the right in Table XII is the measure of the relative efficiency of the Church in reaching the farm tenant and in reaching the farm owner. It takes as its basis the assumption that the Church should reach the farm tenant in whatever proportion it reaches the farm owner, assuming neither greater nor less degree of success. It does not, of course, argue the question that in many of these counties the proportion of farmers, irrespective of their economic status, who are reached, is much lower than should be the case. Accepting that fact, this column shows for each group of counties the degree to which the Church is *as successful* in reaching the tenant as in reaching the owner. In the low tenancy counties the discrepancy is not great, the Church being 91 per cent. efficient with respect to the tenant. In the group of counties with the next highest percentage of tenantry it is 78 per cent. efficient. In the third group of counties, where tenantry ranges from 25 to 50 per cent., it is 61 per cent. efficient. Finally, in those counties where more than half the farms are tenant-operated, and almost all of which are counties that show a high degree of general evangelization, the Church is only 59 per cent. efficient with respect to the tenant.

The Church Parish

For the purposes of the Town and Country Survey, the church parish was defined as the area within which the bulk of its members, attendants and supporters live. In each county surveyed, the parishes of all the churches were indicated on the map. The method used was to follow out each road from the church to that point where the last regular attendant or adherent lived. These outermost points were then connected by straight lines, and the area so included was regarded as the parish of the particular church. In this sense the parish would be understood as the area within which a particular church exercises its direct influence upon individuals who are related to its organization. It does not follow that the church ministers directly to all of the people living within that area, or even to all types of people living there. The mapping of the parishes is, however, significant because, taken together, these parishes show what proportion of the inhabited territory of a given area is directly served by the church in any degree.

In each of the regional volumes of this series, and in the statistical and graphic supplement, will be found maps on which church parishes are indicated. A study of these maps reveals many things

of interest and significance. It is obvious in the first place that a considerable proportion of the whole town and country area is overlaid by the parishes of more than one church. This overlapping of parish areas is in general of three sorts. As elsewhere indicated, a large proportion of the towns and villages have each two or more churches. The parishes of the different churches in the same community center frequently vary quite markedly in their size and shape. In the second place there are frequent instances of the overlapping of the parish areas of churches scattered in location throughout the open country. For example, where two country churches are located, say, three or four miles from each other, each of them will include part of the territory of the other within its parish. Further, there is not infrequently overlapping of the parishes of churches of the same denomination. This is particularly true of certain parts of the South and of the Colonial areas, and of those denominations whose policy it is to distribute their strength in many small organizations located rather near together. Again, there are instances of a church of one denomination located at a community center including within its parish area the entire parish areas of several country churches of the same denomination.

In general, there are two conclusions which cannot help but strike the student of parish maps. The first is, how seldom does it happen that a particular church does not have to share any of its parish area with any other church. The second is, that even in the older settled parts of the country, and where the churches are oldest, most securely established and present in the largest numbers, considerable areas will be found which are not touched by the parishes of any church. These are chiefly the fringes of communities, or "neutral zones," or the isolated neighborhoods off the main lanes of travel. Not infrequently the same county map shows the overlapping of parish upon parish in one part of the territory, and in another large areas where no church is intimately related to a single household.

Very few denominations have even theoretically a consistent and well-developed parish system. The Roman Catholic Church has such a system, and every square mile of inhabited territory is definitely assigned to the parish of a given church. The Protestant Episcopal Church has a similar system in theory, although it is by no means so completely worked out. Most denominations, however, completely lack any parish system at all. Each individual congregation works as far in each direction from its church plant as its abilities and inclinations permit. Its parish may encroach upon or

completely swallow up the parish of a neighboring church of its own faith, or there may be large gaps between the edge of its parish and the edge of another parish of its own faith, or even between its parish and the parish of any other church of whatever denomination. Parish areas do not even have any consistent relation to the community areas. Very generally the churches at a community center have a smaller outreach than the trade area of that same center, and this outreach is much more subject to accidental considerations. Generally speaking, the average Protestant church does not have the reach in miles of a good general store, or of a good creamery or of a moving-picture theater. The parish of the church is, however, very definitely affected by the general development of the neighborhood or community. Only under rather exceptional circumstances is the church parish apt to extend beyond the limits of its neighborhood or community. Contracted communities generally mean contracted parishes.

In the discussion which follows, the data is drawn from twenty-five counties only, these being the counties which were intensively surveyed. The chapter on the relationships of town, village and country includes a brief discussion of this question from that particular point of view. It is sufficient, therefore, to say here that the parish of the average town church is about four times as large as the parish of the average village church, and about six times as large as that of the average country church. In the case of either town or village church the average parish size is contracted by the proximity of country churches. The average size of the country parish is contracted by its proximity to a city church, but not very definitely affected by proximity to a town or village. For all town and country churches in the areas surveyed, the average parish size is about twenty square miles. The variations, however, are frequent, and are very considerable in degree.

The variations by regions differ widely, and these differences carry on their face a suggestion of factors which obviously affect the reach of the church. The Range counties by a very wide margin show the highest average, practically seventy-five square miles. The Middle West is second with about one-third that average, and the Pacific comes next with a slightly lower average. The South is in the fourth place with an average about half that of the Middle West, although the Southern Mountains show an average of less than eight square miles. The churches of the Colonial region have the smallest regional average, slightly less than the average of the South.

The obviously important factors in these differences are the following:

I. *Frequency of churches* should be noted first. It was stated at an earlier point in this chapter that in the South and the Colonial region there are many more churches in proportion to population than elsewhere, and that since the population in these areas has generally a greater density per square mile than farther west, this means that there are actually many more churches per unit of territory. It likewise happens that there are very generally churches of the same denomination near together. Thus, while these regions show a comparatively high degree of evangelism of their town and country population, the greater frequency of churches manifestly operates to reduce the average parish area. The areas in which the churches are farther spaced, although their population is much less thoroughly evangelized, nevertheless offer opportunities to the churches to draw their adherents from much greater distances.

II. *The size of the community* itself is closely related to the foregoing. In large part it varies according to the density of population, a higher density meaning a smaller average size. The smaller the community in general the smaller the parish. In the Southern Mountains it is the topography of the country and the character of its settlement that obviously underlie both the size of the community and the size of its parish. Here the term "community" must be applied to what would ordinarily be considered a neighborhood. Physical barriers require the organization of social life within small units. Churches are thus, in the main, neighborhood institutions. The parish area of each is apt to be contracted to the particular valley or cove, often very limited in extent, in which it is located.

III. A third point, which is in fact hardly more than a sidelight on the foregoing, concerns *the effect of the frequency of towns and villages,* and of their relative importance as centers of rural influence. Two somewhat opposing tendencies are to be noted here. If towns and villages are numerous and near together, their trade areas tend to be contracted, and in like manner the parish areas of the churches tend to be contracted. The Colonial region is an instance of this, and likewise certain parts of the Middle West. On the other hand, in those regions where the influence of the town or village as a rural center is greatest the parish area of a town or village church is apt to be enlarged, and the area of the country church is apt to be contracted. For example, the village of the South has a low degree of importance, and the village churches in the South are near the bottom of the list in their average parish

area. In the Pacific region, however, the rural influence of the towns is very great, and in the average parish area of the town churches this region is near the top of the list.

IV. *The condition of country roads* has an obvious effect at this point. Where transportation is difficult, naturally the reach of the church is lessened; of this the South presents an instance. Where transportation is easy, the reach of the church is lengthened, as is the case with the Pacific counties.

V. *Interdenominational competition* has a clear relation to this question. In those areas in which competition between certain of the most frequent denominations is almost everywhere present, this competition operates to reduce the average parish area by multiplying the number of churches. This is particularly true in the South and in the Colonial regions. Here, generally speaking, an adherent of any one of the several denominations with the most churches, can reach a church of his choice without traveling any great distance. In those sections where competition is not so uniformly present, individual churches frequently have a longer and a more selective reach.

The residence of the pastor has an effect upon the size of the parish which shows more or less uniformly throughout the twenty-five counties. A church with a resident pastor has a reach nearly three times as great on the average as a church with a non-resident pastor. The former averages twenty-seven square miles, the latter only ten square miles. That statement does not mean wholly what it might seem to mean, *i.e.*, it is not merely an argument that a resident pastor can obviously do more to build up the reach of a church than a mere preacher can do. The areas which, on the grounds discussed, have the largest average parishes show also the highest proportions of churches with resident ministers; but if the feeble church with the limited reach generally has no resident pastor because it cannot afford to have one, this lack becomes then one important reason why it remains feeble and limited, and as so often happens, what begins as an effect ends as a cause.

The variation in outreach according to denominations is suggestive. Twenty-five of the denominations present in these counties have each an average parish area for all of their churches in excess of the general average of twenty square miles. The identity of these twenty-five denominations permits some significant conclusions:

I. Fifteen of the twenty-five, including seven of the ten with the highest denominational averages, are wholly or predominantly foreign-language churches. The foreign-language church, especially

where its constituent population is scattered through a population which is generally English-speaking, has naturally enough a reach much longer than the average. There are few instances in these counties of foreign-language churches serving groups which are highly concentrated. There is one such church which has a parish area of less than one square mile. But, generally speaking, such a church seeks out its own particular people and draws them great distances.

II. Those churches which are built on the foundation of some dogma which sharply differentiates them from other churches (as, for example, a particular theory of baptism or of the Sabbath) unless they are in an area where their particular type abounds, will generally considerably exceed the average in parish area. Where this factor is combined with the foreign-language factor, the result is a quite abnormal reach. For example, the Swedish Baptist churches of which there are several in the 179 counties considered, lead the whole list of denominations with an average parish area of 131 square miles. Five of the first twenty-five denominations, and two of the first ten, are thus distinguished by some particular dogma. The Southern Baptist Church, which more than any other on purely theological grounds might be expected to qualify, has an average reach less than the general average, because of the great numbers of its churches near together in those counties studied where they are at all present.

III. Interdenominational or federated churches are well toward the top of the list. They are present in these counties in two distinct forms, the undenominational community church and the interdenominational federated church. Probably their high average is due in part to the fact that religious unity is itself an idea appealing to many, and hence drawing them from considerable distances, and in part because certain of the federated churches in these counties, by reason of federation, have acquired exclusive responsibility for areas rather larger than they would otherwise serve.

All of the ten denominations having the highest group averages are of one of these three sorts; and they include all but four of the first twenty-five.

IV. Next in order, and completing the list of those that exceed the general average, are the denominations that work on the policy of a compacted organization rather than of wide expansion through many small churches. Such a policy naturally works to increase the reach of a church. The Presbyterians and the Reformed churches are good examples. On the other hand, the Methodist

Episcopal churches, which more than any others have developed the contrary policy, are well down in the list.

Chapter Summary

The data for this chapter are drawn from 179 counties with 5,552 churches and 3,353 ministers.

There is an average of one church for every 463 inhabitants. The ratio varies by counties from one church for every 163 people to one church for 11,089.

By regions, the South has most churches proportionately and the Range the fewest.

One church for 1,000 people is regarded as the norm. Only six counties out of 179 approximate this norm. Twenty-seven counties have fewer churches and 146 have more churches than the norm requires.

Sixty per cent. of the counties have twice as many churches, and 15 per cent. have four times as many churches, as the standard calls for.

One-fifth of the communities, containing one-thirteenth of the population, have no churches.

There is one minister for every 1.7 churches and for every 767 people.

The supply of ministers is relatively greater in proportion to the number of churches as the supply of churches in proportion to population diminishes.

Sixteen and five-tenths per cent. of all churches have full-time resident ministers; 19 per cent. have part-time, resident ministers; 52.6 per cent. have non-resident ministers; 11.9 per cent. have no ministers.

The fewer churches there are in proportion to population, the larger the proportion of them that have resident pastors and the larger the proportion of those that have no ministers at all.

The town church has an advantage over the village church, and both of these over the country church, in the matter of resident pastors.

Sixty-eight per cent. of the town churches have ministers who serve one church only, as compared with 43 per cent. of village churches and 19 per cent. of the country churches.

One-third of all ministers combine some other occupation with the work of the ministry. In the South and the Southwest, the proportion is nearly one-half.

Fifty-five per cent. of the ministers serve each two churches or more.

Only one community in five has a full-time, resident minister.

Church membership is 20 per cent. of the total population.

Town churches average 194 members; village churches, 108; country churches, 72.

Twenty-seven and five-tenths per cent. of the total membership is either non-resident or inactive.

By counties the proportion of the population in the church membership varies from 0.4 per cent. to 57.6 per cent.; by region from 6.6 per cent. to 28.3 per cent.

The town and village population is more thoroughly evangelized than the country population, taken as a whole.

The greater the number of churches and ministers in proportion to population, the higher the proportion of the population in the church membership.

Any unusual racial, physical or economic situation is apt to reduce the degree of evangelization.

The Church does not reach the farm-tenants as well as it reaches the farm-owners. The higher the percentage of tenantry the greater the discrepancy between the two groups in respect to church membership.

The average church parish includes twenty square miles. The average is largest for denominations that use a foreign language or that proclaim some peculiar dogma.

CHAPTER IV

The Inter-Relations of Town, Village, Hamlet and Open Country

THE town and country area naturally divides itself into four kinds of population groups. There is a certain number of open country communities and there are communities centering in hamlets, villages and towns. A small proportion of the country population was classified by the survey as "neutral," that is, as living in areas not directly related to any community. These counties also include a number of cities which were not surveyed; but the rural population adjacent to and dependent upon them was surveyed. It is the particular purpose of this chapter to consider these population groups in relation to one another, and to measure the relative contribution of each to the evangelization of the total town and country population. It is concerned only indirectly with the individual problems of town, village, or hamlet.

The basis of the study is 555 communities in 25 counties in 21 states, with a total included population of 473,636, exclusive of the cities which were not surveyed. For the purposes of this study these communities and their population were divided into eight classes; open country communities, hamlet communities, communities centering in villages of under 1,000, communities centering in villages of over 1,000, a small number of villages with no open-country constituency, town communities, rural areas dependent upon cities, and "neutral zones." Each of these types is fairly well distributed geographically, although most of the towns are in the Middle West and the Range. The South, the Range and the Pacific region have proportionately fewer village and more hamlet communities; and the Colonial region and the Middle West are strongholds of the smaller village. The open country communities, while widely distributed regionally, appear to owe their existence either to comparative isolation and low density of population or to a restricted rural importance of the village and the town. Thus, of the total number of 103 open country communities, fifty-five are in four southern counties, and twenty-eight are in four western counties each of which has a great deal of comparatively waste land. The

open country communities do not under current conditions appear to be characteristic of normal rural development.

The typical community unit from the point of view of frequency is one centering in a hamlet or in a village of less than 1,000 population. Seven out of ten are of this character. Only about one-tenth of the whole number have centers which exceed 1,000 in population. The division, according to our usual classifications, shows the open country communities to be 19 per cent. of the total number, the hamlet communities 48 per cent., village communities 30 per cent., and town communities 3 per cent. The percentages differ but slightly from those secured in an analysis of 179 counties which showed 20 per cent. open country, 43 per cent. hamlet, 33 per cent. village and 4 per cent. town communities.

The towns, the larger villages, and the smaller villages, have about equal segments of the total population living within their corporate bounds, and together include about one-third of the whole number. Approximately two-thirds of the total are in the open country or in hamlets, the hamlets having an insignificant fragment. Those making up three-fifths of the population considered actually live on farms. On the other hand, approximately three-fifths live in or adjacent to the centers of over 1,000 population, most of the remainder living in or adjacent to the smaller centers. The open country population independent of any center whatever, living in open-country communities or in "neutral zones," is less than 7 per cent. of the total. This shows the extent to which the trade center hypothesis, which was used throughout these surveys in the determination of community boundaries, actually applies. The farming population is to an overwhelming extent attached to the communities of the various hamlets, village and town centers. The following percentages show the distribution of the *open country* population by type of community:

		Per cent.
Within the community areas of	Cities	11.02
	Towns	8.89
	Villages over 1,000	14.75
	Villages under 1,000	24.89
	Hamlets	29.51
	In open country communities	10.36
	In neutral zones	.58

It is significant that a comparatively small proportion of the total use the community institutions of the larger city and town centers and an even smaller proportion are independent of the community

institutions of any sort of center. The village and the hamlet are the country capitals.

The variations in average total population for the different types of community and also the varying ratios of the open country population to the population of the community center are shown in the following table:

TABLE XIII

A: AVERAGE SIZE OF COMMUNITIES—AVERAGE POPULATION PER COMMUNITY

Type of Community	*Center*	*Country*	*Total*
City	(not surveyed)	1,863	1,863
Town	3,751	1,825	5,576
Village of over 1,000	1,626	1,368	2,994
Village of under 1,000	417	586	1,003
Hamlet	101	327	428
Open country	——	289	289

B: RATIO OF OPEN COUNTRY POPULATION WITHIN COMMUNITY TO POPULATION IN CENTER

Type of Community	*Country*	*Center*
Town	49	100
Village of over 1,000	84	100
Village of under 1,000	140	100
Hamlet	324	100

These averages and the ratios based upon them vary somewhat from region to region. There is less variation in the average population of the various centers than there is in the open country population attached thereto. For example, in the smaller village group the population at the center for the five regions into which the counties were here divided varies only from 375 to 458. The country population, however, varies from 401 to 898. The Pacific region has the lowest average ratio for the hamlets and smaller villages and the Colonial area has the lowest for the larger villages and the towns. However, the order of ratios given in the table holds for every region except the Pacific where the towns draw proportionately more country people than the villages because of the unusual development of California towns as rural centers. In general it may be said that:

(1) The deviation from the average ratio of country people to people at the center is sharpest in the communities with the largest centers. The ratio is most constant in the communities of the hamlets and small villages which seem less affected by accidental considerations.

(2) The *number* of country people attached to the trade center tends to vary directly as the size of the center. The *proportion* of country population to the population at the center tends to vary inversely as the size of the center.

(3) The ratio of the country population to the population of the center is higher for all types of communities with very little industrial development; it is higher also where there is the greatest development of rural service within the centers.

Table XIV shows the distribution of churches by their location in country, hamlet, village or town, and Table XV by the type of community in which they are found.

TABLE XIV

DISTRIBUTION OF CHURCHES BY LOCATION

Located in		*No. of Churches*	*Per Cent. of Total*
Towns		78	7.6
Villages		347	33.6
Hamlets			
In town communities	2		
In village communities	15		
In hamlet communities	217	234	22.7
Open country			
In town communities	13		
In village communities	99		
In hamlet communities	64		
In open country communities	165		
In city communities	31	372	36.1
Total		1,031	100.0

TABLE XV

DISTRIBUTION OF CHURCHES BY TYPE OF COMMUNITIES

Located in		*No. of Churches*	*Per Cent. of Total*
Town communities			
Towns	78		
Hamlets	2		
Open country	13	93	9.0
Village communities			
Villages	347		
Hamlets	15		
Open country	99	461	44.7
Hamlet communities			
Hamlets	217		
Open country	64	281	27.3
Open country communities		165	16.0
City Communities		31	3.0
Total		1,031	100.0

The villages and hamlets have a much larger proportion of the total number of churches than they have of the total population, and the towns and the open country a much smaller proportion. However, the smaller the community, the larger proportionately is the number of churches in it. Thus, the open country communities have on the average less than one-half as many persons per church as the hamlet communities, about one-third as many persons per church as the village communities, and less than one-fifth as many as the town communities. The contrast in these last two sentences may be differently stated. On the basis of the actual location of the church, the population living in towns has one church for every 673 persons, the population of the villages one for every 310, the population of the hamlets one for every 112 and the open country population one for every 773. It is obviously fairer, however, to assume that a church in the center is potentially, at least, for the entire population of its community. From this point of view the people residing in the town communities (whether they live in the town itself or in the adjacent country areas) have one church for every 839 persons. The village communities have one for every 480, the hamlet communities one for every 395, and the open country communities one for every 180.

Ten of the seventeen city rural areas included in the survey have country churches. The cities in these communities, of course, all have a sufficient number of churches, although it does not appear that they reach the country population with much effectiveness. Inasmuch as these city churches were not studied, their rural areas will not be considered in this discussion. There are 119 small communities, with an average population of about 300, which have no churches within their borders. Our discussion therefore concerns 149 town communities, 151 village communities and 254 hamlet communities or open country communities. The first question is: To what extent do country people actually use town or village churches? There is a growing opinion that the town and the village church is to be the most important factor in the evangelization of the country population in the future, that the open country church cannot compete with it, and that the major emphasis in mission policy should be to strengthen the town and village church for rural service. With this opinion as a statement of what ought to be or might be, we are not here concerned. Regarded, however, as a statement of present fact, it is not sustained by the data at hand. In the first place, there are 254 hamlet or open country communities which have country or hamlet churches and which do not have

village or town or city churches within convenient distances. At the outset, therefore, it may be said that 29 per cent. of the town and country population is largely removed from the influence of the town and village churches.

The situation in the town and village communities is as follows: There are eight town communities with a total population of 47,380, including an open country population of 14,225 which have only town churches, forty-seven in all. The other six town communities, with a total population of 30,681, including an open country population of 11,327, have both town churches and open country churches; in all thirty-one town and fifteen country churches. Of the village communities ninety-six, with the total population of 111,802, including an open country population of 49,932, have only village churches —212 in number. Fifty-three village communities with a total population of 95,563, including an open country population of 54,749, have both village and open country churches—135 of the former and 113 of the latter.

There are, therefore, 104 town and village communities in which there are no open country churches, but which have 259 town or village churches. The towns average six churches and the villages average 2.2 churches each. The aggregate church membership is 31,107. The town churches have an average membership more than twice that of the village churches, or 207 to 101. Of the aggregate membership, almost exactly one-third is drawn from the open country population. The town churches draw 22.8 per cent. of their membership from the country, or an average of forty-seven country members per church. The village churches, in proportion to their size, depend much more heavily on the country population, drawing 37.5 per cent. of their members from the country, or an average of forty-six members per church. In the town communities these country members represent 15.5 per cent. of the total country population, while the town members represent 22.6 per cent. of the town population. In the village communities the country members represent 16 per cent. of the country population, while the village members represent 21.6 per cent. of the village population.

These villages and towns are, therefore, virtually on a parity both in reaching the country population and in winning the people in the center itself. These figures may be contrasted first with the corresponding figures for the fifty-nine communities which contain both town or village *and* open country churches. These have, all told, a total of 166 town and village churches and 128 country churches. The town communities have an average of five town and

two and one-half country churches each. The village communities have an average of about two and one-half village and two country churches each. The aggregate church membership is 36,304, that is, the fifty-nine communities in this group have a larger aggregate membership than the 104 communities just discussed. The difference in average size is not so marked, the town churches averaging 226 members and the village churches, 140. The country church in the town communities, however, averages only thirty-four members, whereas the country church in the village communities averages eighty-seven—all of the country churches as a group average eighty-one. Of this total membership, approximately one-half is from the country. The town churches draw almost exactly the same proportion of their membership from the country as in the other group of towns. The village churches draw a slightly larger proportion than in the other group of villages. Country members average fifty-two per town church and forty-eight per village church.

In the town communities the country church members, including both those attached to the town churches and those belonging to country churches, represent 18.7 per cent. of the country population, while the town members represent 27.8 per cent. of the town population. In the village communities the corresponding percentages are 29.9 per cent. of the country population and 30.6 per cent. of the village population. These figures are summarized in the following table:

TABLE XVI

VARIATIONS IN EVANGELIZATION BY TYPE OF COMMUNITY

	Town Communities		*Village Communities*	
	With Country Churches	*Without Country Churches*	*With Country Churches*	*Without Country Churches*
Average membership, town or village church	226	207	140	101
Average membership, country church	34	——	87	——
Per cent. of town or village church membership from country	22.9	22.8	39.4	37.5
Per cent. of town or village population in church membership	27.8	22.6	30.6	21.6
Per cent. of country population in church membership	18.7	15.5	29.9	16.0

In any measurement of the contribution of the town or the village to open-country evangelization certain facts must be kept in

mind. In general, the number of country people included within a town or village community varies directly as the size of the town or village. The towns here studied have an average open-country constituency more than treble that of the villages. The town church has, therefore, an initial advantage over the village church in that it has a much larger number of country people upon whom it may draw. The stronger pull of the town church upon the country population is almost wholly owing to that fact. In those communities in which there are no open-country churches, the churches of the average town enroll 277 country members, whereas the churches of the average village enroll only eighty-three. In those communities in which there are also open-country churches, the churches of the average town enroll 268 country members as compared with 122 for the churches of the average village. On the other hand, there is no such discrepancy in the *proportion* of the available country population reached by the town and village churches respectively. In those communities in which there are no open-country churches, the town and village churches reach approximately the same per cent. of the available country population. The village churches actually depend more largely upon their country membership than do the town churches. But in those communities in which there are also open-country churches, the town church is less affected by that competition than is the village church. The tendency is for the town church to neutralize and retard the adjacent country church which suffers by comparison with its strong, well-manned, well-organized and well-equipped town competitor. The town churches, relatively, do rather better in competition with country churches than where such competition is absent. The village churches, however, relatively, do not do so well.

Another aspect of the situation is shown in this further comparison. In communities which have both town and country churches, the town churches enroll more than three times as many country members as do the country churches. There are 50 per cent. more country members in the average town church than there are in the average country church within the same community. In a corresponding village community, however, the country churches enroll about 50 per cent. more country members than do the village churches. There are only about half as many country members in the average village church as there are in the average country church within the same community. There is less difference between a country church and a village church, in every point that affects church efficiency, than there is between a country church and a

town church. The country church is able to withstand village competition, but is not able to withstand town competition.

There is one sidelight on this situation that is interesting. Communities which have country churches as well as town or village churches, show a substantially larger proportion of the country population enrolled in the church membership than do those that depend wholly upon town or village churches. This is natural. But they also show substantially better results in reaching the town or village population. This is noticeably true in the villages, the proportion of the village population in the churches increasing from 22 per cent., where there are no country churches, to 31 per cent. where there are both village and country churches.

Neither the town nor the village church, in a community that has no open-country churches, reaches the country population as successfully, by a considerable margin, as it reaches the population residing within the limits of the town or village. In town communities having both town and open-country churches, there is a similar situation; the town churches reach about the same proportion of the country population as where they serve the whole field alone, but retard the country churches so that the net results are not much improved. Village churches, however, in communities having both village and country churches, do not particularly retard the country churches. The net result is, therefore, much improved, the proportion of country population enrolled in the churches nearly doubling and the proportion of village population enrolled increasing more than one-third as compared with the communities having village churches only. The best record in evangelization is, therefore, made by the village communities that have both village and country churches.

This conclusion as to the importance of the country churches for open-country evangelization may be further strengthened by other computations. A special list was made of all those communities in which 35 per cent. or more of the total population was enrolled in the church membership and also of those in which less than 10 per cent. was so enrolled. Of the 104 town and village communities that depend entirely upon the town or village church, only 16 per cent. are included among those that have enrolled 35 per cent. or more of their population in the church membership; whereas, 30.8 per cent. are in the group reaching less than one-tenth of their population. Of fifty-nine town and village communities that have both town or village *and* country churches, 32.2 per cent. are included in the group reaching 35 per cent. or more of their

population; whereas only 5.1 per cent. are included in the group reaching less than one-tenth. Thus the communities that have country churches as well as churches at the center have twice as many proportionally in the most successful class and only one-sixth as many proportionally in the least successful class. The hamlets and open country communities, on this showing, do not quite equal the record of those town and village communities that have country churches; but considerably better the record of those that do not. The towns with only town churches reach about 20 per cent. of the total population; and the villages with only village churches reach about 19.1 per cent. The towns with both town and country churches reach 24 per cent. and the villages with both village and country churches reach 30 per cent.

These results may now be contrasted with those obtained in the hamlet and open-country communities where hamlet and open-country churches are alone responsible for the evangelization of the population. Two hundred and fifty-five such communities have an average of 1.8 churches per community, with an average membership of 73, and an enrollment of 27.8 per cent. of the total population. One hundred and fifty-six of these are communities that contain small hamlets. Their total population is 78,512, 22 per cent. living in the hamlets and the remainder in the open country. These communities have 280 churches with a total membership of 19,531, or 24.9 per cent. of the population. The other ninety-nine communities are strictly open country communities. Their aggregate population is 42,321. They have 180 churches with an aggregate membership of 14,093, which equals 31.9 per cent. of the population. These open country communities, therefore, show the highest percentage of evangelization of any type. The table on page 85 recapitulates these figures from the point of view of the percentage of population in the churches.

It would seem from the foregoing that there is a good deal of justification for such a comment as Dr. H. Paul Douglass makes in his "From Survey to Service"—"that the killing range of the town church exceeds its service range." That is, the town church has the effect of diverting from the country church enough of its strength to diminish its influence, but does not so serve the country population as adequately to take the place of the country church. The line of cleavage between the smaller village and the country is not so sharply drawn as that between the town and the country; moreover, the village does not apparently have so destructive an influence on the neighborhood solidarity as does the town. It does

not encroach so seriously upon the strength of the country church and it rather supplements the country church's efforts.

Considering the situation as a whole, it may be said that the village population is somewhat better evangelized than the town population and the latter somewhat better than the country population, though the differences are not very great. Thus in 179

TABLE XVII

PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION INCLUDED IN CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Type of Community	*Town or Village Population*	*Country Population*	*Total Population*
Town communities with town churches only	22.6	15.5	20.0
Village communities with village churches only	21.6	16.0	19.1
Town communities with both town and country churches	27.8	18.7	24.0
Village communities with both village and country churches	30.6	29.9	30.0
Hamlet communities	—	24.9	24.9
Open country communities	—	31.9	31.9
Hamlets and open country combined	—	27.8	27.8

counties, 23 per cent. of the people of the villages are church members, 21 per cent. of the town population and slightly less than 19 per cent. of the country population. In each group the regional variations are considerable. But throughout, the village and town populations show (in some regions by a wide margin) the highest percentage of evangelization. The country churches have an initial handicap in that the towns and villages, rather than the hamlets and the open country, are the centers of pastoral residence. The average country church has to be content with a fraction of the time of a non-resident minister.

Sunday School Enrollment

These general conclusions are significantly strengthened by the consideration of Sunday school enrollment. None of these groups of churches obtains Sunday school scholars as successfully as it obtains church members. The hamlet and open-country communities have less than three-fourths as many Sunday school scholars as church members. The town Sunday schools in the communities without any country churches reach only one-half as many Sunday

school members from the country as they reach church members. Where there are also country churches and Sunday schools they reach only one-third as many Sunday school members as church members. The village schools do proportionately much better. Where there are no country schools they reach slightly more than three-fourths as many Sunday school members as church members. Where there are also country schools they reach 59 per cent. as many. The town Sunday school has a much slighter pull than the town church. No doubt, the distance factor is of importance. This does not count so heavily with the Sunday school in the village, where the proportion of Sunday school scholars to church members is about the normal proportion. In each case, however, the Sunday school succumbs to country competition more quickly than the church does; but the village Sunday school resists it better both actually and relatively than the town Sunday school. This may be shown in another way. Where town Sunday schools have the whole field, they enroll on the average one in every thirteen of the rural population. Where they compete with country Sunday schools they enroll one in twenty-one. Where the village Sunday school has the whole field it enrolls one in every eight of the rural population, and where it competes with country schools it enrolls one in every fourteen. The proportion of the country population enrolled in Sunday schools (whether town, village, or open-country Sunday schools) within the various types of communities is as follows:

Where there are only town Sunday schools	1 in 13
Where there are both town and country Sunday schools	1 in 9
Where there are only village Sunday schools	1 in 8
Where there are both village and country Sunday schools	1 in 5.4
Where there are only hamlet or country Sunday schools	1 in 5

The best work is done, therefore, where the hamlet or open-country Sunday school is unrestricted by either town or village competition. We may attempt on the basis of these various sets of figures to measure the total contribution of town and village churches to the evangelization of country population in the following table:

TABLE XVIII

A. DISTRIBUTION OF TOTAL NUMBER OF COUNTRY CHURCH MEMBERS:

In town churches	3,823 or	6.0 per cent.
In village churches	14,491 or	22.6 per cent.
In hamlet or open country churches	45,759 or	71.4 per cent.
Total	64,073 or	100.0 per cent.

B. DISTRIBUTION OF TOTAL NUMBER OF COUNTRY SUNDAY SCHOOL MEMBERS:

In town Sunday schools	1,643	or	3.7 per cent.
In village Sunday schools	9,855	or	22.0 per cent.
In hamlet or open country Sunday schools	33,204	or	74.3 per cent.
Total	44,702	or	100.0 per cent.

It appears, therefore, that in the aggregate the town is a comparatively negligible factor in the problem of country evangelization. It has even less importance from the point of view of religious education. The village is more important, and about as important in one particular as in the other. However, the open country and hamlet churches and Sunday schools are still by all odds the biggest factors in country evangelization, enrolling in their membership nearly three-fourths of all the country church members and the country Sunday school members. Both town and village obviously have a much smaller importance religiously than they have socially and economically.

One other question of interest concerns the size of the average church parish measured in miles. A church parish is regarded as the area within which the bulk of its regular attendants, members and supporters live. The averages for churches under various circumstances are as follows:

TABLE XIX

AVERAGE NUMBER OF SQUARE MILES IN CHURCH PARISH

	Square Miles
Town church in communities with only town churches	90.43
Town church in communities having country churches also	57.21
Village church in communities with only village churches	21.46
Village church in communities having country churches also	15.55
Country church in town communities	17.98
Country church in village communities	11.17
Country or hamlet church in hamlet communities	14.92
Country church in open country communities	11.93
Country church in city communities	7.06

Certain points are worth noting in connection with the foregoing. The town church parish greatly exceeds that of any other type of church. The town church not only draws more members from the country on the average, but it draws them farther. This is, of course, in line with common observation, that the pull of the town church from the country is selective; that is, it tends to draw from considerable distance those individuals who for denominational or other reasons are particularly attracted to the larger, better or-

ganized town church. Within this larger area its influence is by no means inclusive of all people or all types of people. The village church exercises its influence within a much more restricted area. The presence within the community of a country church greatly contracts the parish range of the church in the center, but the town loses much more proportionately than the village church does. So far as the country church is concerned, while it has by a considerable degree a smaller average parish than the town or village church, its *proximity* to town, village, or hamlet does not in any uniform way contract it geographically, whatever the effect of this proximity may be upon its total strength. The probable reason for this is that the average country church is a neighborhood and not a community institution. There are, of course, many exceptions, but on the average the country church serves a physically more contracted group. The church at the center on the other hand, tends to become community-wide in its range.

The village church, however, has less to differentiate it from the country church than has the town church; the difference in size, in equipment, in program is less marked. Hence the village church makes slower headway than the town church against the neighborhood groupings within its community. The small average size of the country church parishes within the rural areas of the larger centers, corresponds with the general weakness of these churches in other points. The country churches in the neighborhood of the city have the double handicap of the competition of a very much larger city church and the rapid disintegration of neighborhood life under the influence of the city. There are better transportation facilities from the country to the city than from the country to the village. Also a country church placed near a city usually has an elliptical orbit drawing chiefly from the direction away from the city.[1]

A special study was made of the 100 town or village churches having the largest number of open-country members. These 100 churches are in sixty-five different communities, in eighteen counties in fifteen states. Proportionately the village communities having both village and country churches furnish the largest quota. The smallest quota relatively is furnished by the town communities having both town and country churches. The geographical distribution of these 100 churches helps to support the contention that the question of a town or village church proving attractive to country people is apt to be part of the larger question of the town itself

[1] For a more extended discussion of church parishes, see pages 67-73.

attracting country people. The counties in which the villages and towns are important rural centers for economic, social and other reasons, furnished a proportionately larger number of churches for this list of 100. Thus Sedgwick County, Kansas, furnished 11; Stanislaus County, California, 18; Sheboygan County, Wisconsin, 9; Columbia County, Pennsylvania, 10; Salem County, New Jersey, 8; Clay County, Iowa, 6. The Range counties did not furnish any; while counties like Warren County, New York, Price County, Wisconsin, Lane County, Oregon, and the various Southern counties furnished only one or two or three apiece. The Pacific region furnished the largest proportion relatively; the Colonial region the smallest proportion aside from the Range.

These 100 churches are on the whole above the average in size. Only five of them have a total membership of less than 100, while twenty-two of them exceed 300 members each. The averages for the whole number are as follows:

Total membership	241	
Country members	118	
Proportion of country membership to total membership		48.9 per cent.

These figures may be compared with averages for all town and country churches studied, as follows:

Total membership	131	
Country membership	44	
Proportion of country membership to total members		33.33 per cent.

Twenty-eight different denominations are represented among the 100. Twelve of these have but a single representative and four have only two each. The largest single denominational group is the Methodist Episcopal with twenty-eight. A comparison of the total number of town and village churches for the various denominational families, with the number of their churches included in these 100, indicates that the largest proportional representation is from those denominations having a foreign-language bond, or those which are liturgical. Such churches have a tenacious hold upon their members and are able to attract them from considerable distances. Thus, whereas the 100 churches represent a little less than one-fourth of all the town and village churches, they include 58 per cent. of the Reformed churches and more than one-third of the Lutheran churches. So far as other denominations are concerned there seem to be no very significant differences.

Forty-one per cent. of these churches compete with country churches in their own communities. Out of the forty-one instances in which there was rural competition, there were sixteen cases in which an adjacent country church had a full-time resident pastor; and in three additional cases there was a part-time resident pastor. These churches in the center, therefore, do not have to overcome much pastoral work by country churches. In only three instances is one of these town or village churches united on a circuit with other churches in the same community.

Predominantly these 100 churches are in the small villages. More than one-half of them are in villages of 750 population or less and about one-third are in villages of 500 or less. Only fifteen are in towns, nine of these being in one town. These villages and towns, however, show a considerably larger country population than the average. Thus the towns represented in this list of 100 churches have an average open-country population in their communities of 3,034, as compared with an average of 1,826 for all towns. The villages have an average country constituency of 905 as compared with an average for all villages of 674. That is, these best farmers' churches are situated in the best farmers' towns. This tendency is further confirmed by certain other facts. Of these towns and villages, 87.7 per cent. report that there is coöperation between the town and village merchant and the farmer. For all the other towns and villages, only 73 per cent. report such coöperation. The existence of community spirit is reported in 78.5 per cent. of these communities, as compared with 68.7 per cent. of all other towns and villages. Fifty and eight-tenths per cent. have farmers' co-operative organizations, as compared with 39.5 per cent. of all others. These margins of difference are, of course, not wide enough to be decisive; but they do show that the problem of the village church attracting country people is at least related to the village itself being attractive to the country people.

Among the factors which make possible the extensive rural evangelization of these churches, the following may be noted: Of all town and village churches, 44.2 per cent. have full-time resident pastors. Of these 100 churches sixty-two have such pastors.

The last point to be discussed in this chapter concerns the co-operation between the village and town merchants and the farmers. Information is available on this point for 488 communities, of which 351, or 71.9 per cent., state the existence of such coöperation; the remainder stating the opposite. The percentage of the total num-

ber of communities reporting the existence of such coöperation by type of community follows:

Towns	84.6 per cent.
Villages	78.3 per cent.
Hamlets	70.3 per cent.
Open country	63.4 per cent.

While these variations are not very wide, it should be noted that the proportion of the cases in which there is coöperation varies directly as the size of the center. Whether this means that the merchant in the small community, being nearer the farmer, has more opportunity to quarrel with him is not apparent. The variations by regions for all communities are as follows:

Middle West	86.0 per cent.
Pacific	76.8 per cent.
Range	75.0 per cent.
Southern	71.7 per cent.
Colonial	62.3 per cent.

For all those town and village communities which have town and village churches only, the percentage was 78.5, as compared with 85.4 per cent. for those town and village communities having both town or village and country churches.

There is an interesting question as to whether there is any correlation between the presence or absence of a coöperative spirit between the merchants and farmers and the existence of farmers' coöperatives. It is sometimes assumed that the organization of farmers' coöperatives has been hastened, if not largely occasioned, by the existence of friction between the farmers and the merchants. Information is available on this point for 503 communities. Of these 149, or about 30 per cent., have farmers' coöperatives. Of the 149 communities, 117 report that there is cordial coöperation between farmer and merchant. Twenty report that there is not, and twelve do not answer this question. In 354 communities there are no farmers' coöperative organizations. Two hundred and forty-two of these report cordial coöperation between farmers and merchants, and 112 report the opposite.

These same figures may be put in a different way. Of all the communities which claim that there is a coöperative spirit between the farmers and the merchants, virtually one-third have farmers' coöperative organizations. Of all the communities which report that there is not a cordial relation between farmers and merchants,

a little less than one-sixth have farmers' coöperative organizations. On the other hand, of the communities which have farmers' coöperative organizations, 85 per cent. claim that the relations between merchants and farmers are cordial; whereas of those which do not have farmers' coöperative organizations, only 68 per cent. make such a claim.

There is no proof here that local friction is the primary cause of farmers' coöperative organizations, unless one may assume that once they were established they have been instrumental in removing whatever friction previously existed. On the basis of these figures a community is more than twice as likely to have a coöperative organization among farmers if the relations between the farmers and merchants are cordial than if they are not; and, conversely, those relations are much more likely to be cordial if a coöperative is in existence than if it is not. Eliminating from the figures those communities for which information is lacking on either one or the other of these points, we have these results from a total of 491 communities:

117, or 23.8 per cent., have both farmers' coöperatives and general coöperation between merchants and farmers.
112, or 22.8 per cent., have neither.
242, or 49.3 per cent., have cordial general coöperation but no coöperatives.
20, or 4.1 per cent., have the coöperatives but not general cordial feeling.

That is to say, a community is as apt to have both as it is to have neither, and it is very much more apt to have a good general feeling with a coöperative organization than it is to have the coöperative organization without the good general feeling. All of this proves, merely, that the friction between merchants and farmers is not so prevalent as is sometimes supposed and that whether it exists or not it is not the controlling influence in the formation of farmers' coöperative organizations.

Chapter Summary

Only one community in ten includes a place of over 1,000 inhabitants.

One-fifth of the communities are strictly open country, but their existence is due either to comparative isolation or to restricted importance of the towns and villages. The open-country community is not characteristic of normal rural development at the present time.

The average community has at its center a place of from 25 to 1,000 population.

The *number* of country people attached to a trade center varies directly as the size of the center.

The *proportion* of country population to the population of the trade center to which it is attached, varies inversely as the size of the center.

As an aid in measuring the service of a town or village church to its contiguous rural area, a comparison is made between those town and village communities that have *only* town or village churches and those that have *also* open country churches within the bounds of the community.

The town or village church does not reach the open country population as effectively as it reaches the population in the trade center.

A town church reaches its contiguous country population about as well when it competes with country churches within the community as when it does not. But a country church near to a town is apt to be retarded and generally ineffective.

A village church makes less headway with country people when it competes with country churches within its community. A country church is not apt to be retarded by its proximity to a village.

The best evangelistic record is made in open-country communities.

In town communities which have both town and country churches, the town churches enroll three times as many country members as do the country churches. There are more country members in the average town church than in the average country church in these communities. The average village church, however, has fewer country members than has the average country church.

The town or village Sunday school is ineffective in reaching country people.

Considering the town and country area as a whole, the town and village churches are negligible factors in open country evangelization and religious education. In general, the smaller villages are of more importance in this field than are the larger villages and towns.

The best "farmers' towns" are apt to have the best farmers' churches.

There is no demonstrable relation between the existence of farmers' coöperative organizations and the presence or absence of coöperation between farmers and town or village merchants.

CHAPTER V

Church Growth and Decline

THE causes of church growth or decline are frequently obscure. He would be rash indeed who would attempt to devise a formula infallibly to gauge any church's possibilities of success. The Church is at once too human and too divine an institution to be reduced to a formula. Because it is human it has a way of developing a personality, and there is always an unpredictable element in personality. Because it is divine it may be expected at any time to assert itself in contradiction to all known rules and to succeed in spite of seemingly unsurmountable difficulties. Into the success or failure of a church many factors enter in varying combinations and with varying degrees of influence in particular cases. Some of these are factors which wholly elude statistical analysis. The personality of a minister, for example, tenacity of tradition, the subtle influence of political or social or ethical ideals, differences in education or in prosperity, these and similar factors frequently dominate particular situations. Statistical analysis must be confined to the objective and the measurable. On the other hand, there are general tendencies in church growth which can be described, the direction of which can be noted, and their influence measured with some degree of assurance. An individual church may overcome them, but on the average they lay a safe basis for general policies and have a wide range of applicability. The discussion is necessarily of average conditions. Specific instances may contradict the conclusions here laid down, but such specific instances strengthen rather than invalidate the conclusions.

The question of church growth is of the utmost importance. The declining church, like the abandoned church, whatever the reasons for its decline, is a burden upon religious faith. It is a feeble symbol (a dying epistle, one might say, known and read of all men), that religion as there exemplified approaches impotence. The best evidence of religious efficiency is the attitude of the community towards its church. This attitude is most clearly indicated by the support it gives the church. In any reasonably stable population the church which is rendering efficient and indispensable service

will in the average instance be maintained and adequately supported. The growth of a church thus becomes one good index of the general state of health of religion in the community.

Throughout this discussion it will be difficult always to distinguish clearly between cause and effect. Very frequently a condition which is the result of church decline rather than its cause, or which is itself induced by the same factors which have influenced decline, will become an important cause of further decline. It is hard to know where to draw the line. Unless otherwise stated, throughout this discussion a gaining church will be understood to mean a church which has had a net increase of membership during the last decade. A ten-year comparison is used rather than the record of a single year, as in most of the regional volumes, because a ten-year record is less likely to be affected by exceptional considerations. There are two difficulties in its use. One is that our data is such that the comparison of the present with ten years ago must be made on the basis of total rather than active membership. This requires the assumption that the proportion of non-resident and inactive members is not materially different in the two totals. The second difficulty is that this limits the comparison to those churches which are at least ten years old and for which ten-year membership records are available. For most of the items considered, data are available for about 900 churches in the twenty-five counties which were intensively surveyed. The results obtained in this analysis appear by every reasonable test to be worthy of acceptance as typical. If they vary from the average it is to indicate a condition slightly better than average, since it is the small, weak churches which are most apt to have poor records and which therefore have to be thrown out in this study for lack of data.

One cannot help but be impressed by the sensitiveness of the Church as an institution to all changes which vitally affect the society supporting it. Various tendencies affecting the conditions of country life during the past decade have seriously conditioned the problem of the Church. The most obvious of these changes has been the shift in population. The towns and the larger villages are generally growing in population. In the newer sections the open-country population has been likewise growing, though not so rapidly, but in the older settled sections the population of hamlets and of the open country, even in areas whose general population has increased, has usually suffered loss during the last decade. The tendency is for church membership to follow population with remarkable similarity. In these twenty-five counties two-thirds of the

churches which are gaining are in communities in which the population is increasing, and at least one-quarter more of the churches are registering gain in the face of a stationary rather than of a decreasing constituency. Very few churches are found which were able to gain consistently while the population which they served was decreasing.

Quite as important in its effect upon the Church as the actual loss of country population, has been the current shift of interest so apparent in many places toward the town and village, which is equivalent to a further loss of population so far as open-country institutions are concerned, and which increases the initial advantages of the town and village institutions. Thus 88 per cent. of all the town churches are growing, 63 per cent. of the village churches are growing, while but 47 per cent. of the hamlet churches are growing. All roads lead to town. The effect of this upon the country may be seen in the fact that the chances of growth in the country church vary according to its distance from the center. Thus, of all country churches which are situated more than two miles from a town or village, 55 per cent. are growing, but of the country churches which are situated within two miles of the town or village, only 37 per cent. are growing. The margins of difference between these various percentages are too decisive to be accidental. It is hard to maintain a church in a decreasing population or where the interest of the population is being diverted from its local institutions toward some neighboring larger center; and this is true even though the areas of a declining population are, generally speaking, those in which the country church is most firmly rooted, while the growing communities, so far as the open country is concerned, are generally in areas in which the establishment of the church is least secure. But decline in population engenders a psychology of defeat; and, in fact, this explains also the difficulty of the church which must compete with the increasing influence of a near-by institution more strategically located. The consequence is, as has been intimated in other connections, that the farm is becoming our most difficult church problem in the town and country area.

The Church is sensitive also to changes in the composition of population, whether the total is increasing or decreasing. The average church is comparatively inflexible both in its organization and in its attitude of mind. It does not adjust itself easily to changing conditions, nor does it easily assimilate new elements, and this is particularly true of the country church. The Church is an instrument of conservation rather than of innovation. Few country com-

munities have been left without important changes in the composition of their population. For one thing, new Americans are finding their way onto the land; and for another, people of American stock are moving from region to region. The population has much less stability than formerly. It is only the exceptional church in the country that can assimilate new Americans as they come into its community. It is only a little less exceptional for a church to assimilate people of its own racial stock who come to it with a different background. Thus when there come into a community with non-liturgical churches considerable numbers of people with a liturgical tradition in their religious life, or vice versa, the result is apt to be a new church rather than a strengthening of the old church. The old church expects the newcomers to conform to its ways. Thus population changes, whether in number or in kind, strongly influence the welfare of the church.

Many churches have shown, however, that it is not necessary for a church to fail even in the face of such conditions. These conditions make the problem of maintenance and survival more acute. The church to survive must put forth special effort. It will thus survive through adapted methods of church work and administration, and through the cultivation of more flexible attitudes. There seems to be no valid reason why the church if properly administered should not hold its people in the country, make their life there more pleasant and more profitable, and reach and hold the newcomers that move into its neighborhood; but the methods of work which are now in vogue are not generally adequate to these needs. They have been carried over from a day when conditions were different. The attempt to meet modern problems with pioneer methods is one of the reasons compelling the country church to face the bare problem of survival. Most country churches devote all of their available energy to the mere task of keeping themselves alive, and none is left for a consideration of the problem of an increased efficiency.

The General Situation

Of all the town and country churches studied, a little less than six out of ten are growing. The proportion varies by regions, but only in the West does the number growing exceed two-thirds of the total. The Colonial region has the lowest average. Here less than half the churches are growing, while only slightly more than one-third have made a net gain of 10 per cent. or more in their membership. The Middle West, which is next, makes a considerably better

record, with 61 per cent. growing, while 55 per cent. gained 10 per cent. or more. The South slightly improves upon the Middle West, since 63 per cent. are growing, while 54 per cent. gained as much as 10 per cent. or slightly less. The best records by a wide margin are made in the regions farther West. The Pacific has the largest proportion growing, 73 per cent. But the record of the Range is in some respects better, and made in the face of rather more difficult conditions. Seventy-one per cent. of the churches in the Range counties are growing, and all of these gained at least 10 per cent., whereas in the Pacific only 64 per cent. of the total gained as much as 10 per cent. For the country as a whole, just about every other church maintained an average annual gain of 10 per cent., which it is generally considered is about the lowest average gain that offers real security for the future of a church in areas subject to such extensive movements of population.

The regional differences are very clearly observed when one considers the question of the percentage of total membership gain for the ten years. The order of the regions is the same, but the differences between them are more marked. Thus in the Colonial region, where the greatest losses in population occur, the net gain of all the town and country churches in ten years was less than 8 per cent. In the Middle West it was more than twice that, being practically 20 per cent.; in the South it was about 21 per cent. The percentages of these two regions with their relatively stable population are on the whole encouraging. The West, of course, had the advantage of rapid increase of population, which is the real explanation of the net gain of 60 per cent. in churches of the Pacific region, and of 84 per cent. in the Range churches. The variations by counties within regions were considerable, as local forces operated to affect conditions peculiar to the given county. Thus, while several counties registered a net loss in ten years, one county in the Range, with a rather small total membership to be sure, had a net gain of 148 per cent. The lowest county record in the Range is by a fair margin higher than the highest county record in the Colonial region.

Methods of Church Administration and Work

In all the older settled sections of America, churches were planted to serve the convenience of men who walked or drove oxen. We have not developed any consistent policy in establishing churches to conform to current conditions. Mere space is no longer the dom-

inant factor that it once was. Nevertheless, we are left with churches planted as though distance were the one insurmountable obstacle to church success. Thus through large areas the very multiplicity of churches makes the struggle for survival a very real one. A considerable proportion of the churches of these areas are so seriously cramped that they have no real opportunity for growth. They are foredoomed to remain small and weak and handicapped by their inability to develop an adequate program, a disadvantage which is bound to become more serious as the demand upon the church increases. This tendency may be shown by dividing the churches according to the average number of people per church in their communities. Four groups were considered: those in communities having 250 or fewer persons per church, those having from 251 to 500, those having from 501 to 1,000, and those having more than 1,000. About one-third of the entire number are in the first group, a little less in the second, while the last group has about one-twentieth of the entire number. In the first group 46 per cent. of the churches are growing, in the second 58 per cent., in the third 66 per cent. and in the last 76 per cent. This order holds for every region and in general, though not uniformly, for nearly every county.

The next point of importance concerns pastoral leadership. From the point of view of business efficiency the country church lacks adequate supervision and direction. There are few kinds of businesses which will run themselves without trained personal supervision; and the church is not one of these. It is an enterprise which requires constant care. The minister is the man in whom responsibility for this care is vested. The efficiency of the church will depend largely upon whether his ability and his opportunity are equal to his task.

One serious weakness in the situation is the widespread practice of dividing up a minister between two or more different charges, compelling him to attempt to do in several different places work which should receive his constant attention in each place. It has been noted how few comparatively of the country churches have the undivided attention of the minister. Whether this is due to the minister's necessity of combining another occupation with that of the ministry, or to the fact that he simultaneously serves two or more churches, the effect is alike apparent from the results obtained in church work. The larger the proportion that a church has of a minister's time, the better is its chance not only for growth in membership, but for the development of an efficient organization

and program. This has appeared in the discussions of virtually every chapter of this volume. The churches whose pastors serve but one church each and have no other occupation than the ministry, make about a 50 per cent. better record in church growth than those whose pastors divide their attention between two occupations or two or more churches. Three-fourths of the former are growing, and about half of the latter. The margin of difference between the two types of churches varies somewhat between regions. The church with the part-time of a minister has its greatest disadvantage in those areas in which the task of the church is most difficult, where it has the most indifference to overcome and has the greatest natural obstacles with which to contend. Where the program of the church is less pretentious the margin of difference is less.

Preaching can be done by a part-time minister, or by a non-resident minister. His handicap comes in relation to the broader service program of the church. Therefore, in the South the size of the circuit has little relation to membership growth. Elsewhere it may be stated as a law that the larger the circuit the less the chance of the individual church registering a growth. The losing churches average two and one-third churches per circuit, the gaining churches average about one and two-thirds. Of course, the geographical relation to each other of the churches on a circuit is an important factor. Where the churches are so situated that their respective parishes are virtually contiguous, making in effect one large parish with several preaching points but with the possibility of developing a closely integrated program, the circuit system does not have noticeably disadvantageous results. But where the churches are so situated that their parishes are quite distinct, and a considerable amount of travel is necessary to go from one to the other, which of course is very frequently the case, the handicap is much more serious. It is apparent, however, that on the whole it is bad business for the church to send a part of a man to do a whole man's work.

Closely related to this question of the circuit system is the question of the residence of ministers. Obviously, if a minister serves a circuit of four widely scattered churches, three of them must necessarily be regarded as having a non-resident minister. Absentee landlordism is recognized as an important source of agricultural stagnation; but a church does not respond any more readily to absent treatment than does a farm. Yet few open-country churches have resident pastors, and not all village and town churches have them. Of all the churches which are gaining in membership, more than two-thirds have resident ministers. Of all the churches

losing, only one-third have resident ministers. This proportion holds virtually throughout America. The chief diversion from it is in the Colonial area, where the decline of population has proven an obstacle which even a resident minister cannot overcome.

This difference may be expressed in another way. Of all the churches having each a full-time resident minister, three-fourths are growing; of those having each a part-time resident minister, nearly two-thirds are growing; of those having non-resident ministers, less than 45 per cent. are growing. The proportion of growing churches which have full-time resident pastors is more than double the proportion of losing churches which have such pastors. What is obviously lacking in most country churches is the minister who actually belongs to his community, who lives in it, who speaks its language and who is especially trained to work according to its exact needs. Long-distance ministering is inadequate ministering, and in the long run unsuccessful ministering.

The size of the membership of a church has a clear, though not decisive bearing upon its working efficiency. In certain districts many churches are small because they are new, just as their communities are new. They are in the line of growth because their population is growing. They may be expected to grow because they are needed. In other places, where the rural civilization is older and more mature, and where the population is not growing, many of the churches are small because the churches are too numerous and too near together. They do not stand in the line of growth. Thus not a few churches were found which had a handful of members, sometimes but two or three, who were holding onto an old church which long since had ceased, if it ever had begun, to fill an important place in the religious life of its neighborhood. The impact of most of these small churches upon their communities is necessarily slight. They can ill afford to pay for the leadership or the equipment, and are unable to develop a program adequate to success. This latter group of small churches is twice the size of the former group. The small church that is needed should have every aid to survive and grow strong; but two-thirds of the smaller sized churches are dead weights on the progress of the Kingdom and need to be discouraged by every legitimate device known to the administrative forces of American Christianity.

The various regional volumes in this series have shown with surprising consistency that the small church, judged on the basis of one year's accomplishment, is not a going concern. Of all the churches with fewer than fifty members, only one-third are growing.

Of those with more than fifty members, about 70 per cent. are growing. On the basis of the last ten years' record, the margin between the two groups is not so wide, but it is wide enough nevertheless to be significant. As might be expected, the handicap of the small church is greatest in the open country. The small struggling church must be recognized as presenting one of the most difficult phases of the whole rural religious problem.

The program of a church clearly influences its growth, since it concerns both the appeal of the church to the interest of the community and its service to the needs of the community. A gaining church, for example, is seldom found without a Sunday school. It is much more likely than is the losing church to have a service of worship every Sabbath. It is three times as likely to have a class to prepare for church membership. On the average it changes its pastor less frequently.

Evangelism in the narrow sense of holding special evangelistic services has not the uniform relation to church growth that might be expected. Taking the country as a whole, the gaining churches had rather more evangelistic services than had the losing ones. Sixty per cent. of the gaining churches had revivals during the last five years, as compared with something less than half of the churches with a declining or stationary membership. The gaining churches as a whole averaged one evangelistic service every other year, while the losing churches averaged one every third year. In the Middle West and the Range, however, the churches that are growing had rather fewer evangelistic services than those that are declining. In these areas the churches which depend most largely upon formal revival are apt to be churches which regard that type of evangelism as a substitute for pastoral work or community service. As a substitute, it is not particularly satisfactory. On the other hand, in the South particularly, formal evangelism is the major part of the program of the average country church and fills a much larger place in the religious life of the community than it could possibly do in any other region. The churches here have double the average number of revivals, most churches having such services every year.

The real influence of a broad-gauge, seven-day program is sometimes difficult to determine. As an aid in measuring it, a special analysis was made of all churches of over 100 active members each which had made a net gain of more than 25 per cent. in their membership during the last decade. There are sixty such churches in these counties. Being above the average in size, their high percentage of growth is not so apt to have resulted from accidental con-

siderations, and its causes are easier to determine. The field workers who studied these particular churches were asked to give a careful appraisal of the reasons for their growth. In perhaps one-third of the cases it was the judgment of the surveyor that growth of population, together with a strong conventional program with an organization sufficiently well-knit to be able to take advantage of prosperity, was probably the biggest element in the situation. In half of the whole number, credit was given to the influence of a well-rounded program adapted to the needs of the community and directed by a well-equipped leader of appealing personality. In the remaining number of cases, leadership alone was set down as the determining factor; and in each instance this leadership was rapidly effecting a change in the program.

Many of the denominations have developed characteristic differences in their general programs of work, as in their organizations. Not all of the denominations at work in these counties are represented by a sufficient number of churches to permit a trustworthy generalization. Considering, however, those denominations which have in these counties a sufficient number of churches for a fair judgment, their order on the basis of the proportion of their churches which registered a net growth during the ten-year period is as follows: Reformed churches lead the list with 86 per cent.; Congregational, second with 71 per cent.; Baptists third with 68 per cent.; Presbyterian fourth with 65 per cent.; Christian fifth with 63 per cent.; Lutheran sixth with 60 per cent. In only two other denominations were more than half the churches growing. These were the Methodist Episcopal with 53 per cent., and the Protestant Episcopal with 52 per cent. Of the various forms of community, federated or union churches only 38 per cent. were growing.

In concluding this discussion it may be noted that in these twenty-five counties during the last ten years 142 churches have been abandoned. There are, of course, many more abandoned churches in these counties, but the others suspended work more than ten years ago. Of these 142, membership records are available for 106. With four exceptions, they all had fewer than fifty members in 1910. Their total was 1,274, or an average of twelve per church. They are distributed widely throughout the country, occurring in every region. The largest number proportionately were in the Range, and the smallest number in the South. That is perfectly understandable. There are many churches in the South maintaining a form of service which, if they were in the Range, would have been long since abandoned. That is to say, it is more difficult

to maintain a church in the newer frontier counties, and to live at all they have to have a higher standard of equipment and efficiency. In the South particularly, many churches are able to keep going on the minimum of equipment, service and finance. The abandoned church presents one very unfortunate aspect of our rural church policy. Few denominations systematically close out their declining churches when their usefulness is ended and deliver their membership over to some other living congregation. The result is that many churches are permitted to languish after they have ceased to be of any effective value, and when they are finally abandoned their membership is very likely to be lost to organized church work.

To offset the loss of these churches, ninety-one new churches were founded during the last ten years. Sixty of these in the open country now have 1,910 members, twenty-seven in the villages 1,331 members, and four in towns have 305 members. Of the town churches two are in the Middle West and two in the Colonial region. Of the village churches all but one are in the Pacific, Range and Middle West areas. Country churches were in every region, but four-fifths of them were in the Range and in the South.

The various points which this discussion has developed are by no means mutually exclusive. They are, in fact, all interrelated, and which is the fundamental cause it is not easy to say. Clearly, however, the gravest church problem of these counties at the present time is the problem of making efficient those churches upon which the farming population depends. This demands some fundamental reconstruction of the methods of church work and administration, with a recognition of the broad inclusive nature of the problem, and a serious and scientific effort to equip the churches adequately to cope with the situation.

Chapter Summary

It is not possible fully to formulate the law of church growth or decline.

There are unpredictable elements in church success which cannot be statistically analyzed or reduced to a rule.

It is possible, however, to state the general tendencies which will hold good in most cases.

Church membership tends to follow population.

Few churches can gain consistently in a diminishing population.

The chances of growth of a country church vary according to its distance from town; the farther away it is, the better.

The average church is adversely affected by changes in the racial or social composition of its population.

More than two-fifths of all town and country churches are not growing. Only one-half make an annual membership gain of 10 per cent. or more.

The multiplication of the number of churches in proportion to the population decreases the individual church's chance of growth.

The church which has the full time of a minister has a 50 per cent. better chance for growth than has the one with only part time of a minister. The larger the circuit the slighter the chance of growth.

The percentage of churches that are growing varies according to average size. In a stable or diminishing population the small church is apt to be on the down grade.

A broad-gauge program, combining evangelism, religious education and service, greatly increases the probability of growth.

One hundred and forty-two churches have been abandoned in twenty-five counties within ten years. Ninety-one new churches have been organized.

CHAPTER VI

Home Mission Aid as a Factor in Rural Church Development

THE home missions field is revealed only in part in these surveys. We see here chiefly one side of the great task of home missions as it has been developed by the larger denominational boards. The service of home missions to the exceptional elements of our population such as the American Indian, the Spanish-speaking population, the lumberjacks and other migrant laborers, the immigrant and the Southern Mountaineer is treated only in paragraphs or at most in a chapter in the regional volumes of the series of which this book is a summary.

The Field

What is shown is chiefly the old historic field of home missions—the American village or country neighborhood where the home missions effort expresses itself in a subsidy to an organized church to assist it in the maintenance of a pastor either alone or in conjunction with other churches. These aided churches are, theoretically at least, potentially self-supporting, the historic exhortation of home missions to its children being "come to self-support." While other types of mission work have had a constantly increasing importance for many years, this type is still the largest single segment of the whole task and occasions from a third to two-thirds of the home mission expenditures of most denominations. The methods of administration vary for different denominations; but however the responsibility may be divided among national, state and district agencies, the usual method of aiding churches in village and country communities is by the provision of grants of money, ordinarily for a period of one year but renewable indefinitely, to apply on pastors' salaries.

Obviously, what is here said in description, comment or criticism, applies only to this particular type of home mission work and has no application to the broader aspects of denominational home missionary programs.

Extent of Rural Home Mission Aid

In these twenty-five counties, 206 town and country churches out of a total of 1,052, or about one in five, receive home mission aid. In addition to these, five aided churches in small cities in Orange County, California, are also considered. These were included in the original survey because of their close relationship to the surrounding countryside. The percentage of all town and country churches which are aided varies greatly by regions. It is lowest in the Middle West where less than 10 per cent. are aided, and is highest on the Range where the proportion is nearly two-thirds. The South and the Colonial region have about the same proportion, approximately one-sixth. On the Pacific Coast 28 per cent. are aided. Twenty-four of the twenty-five counties contain aided churches.

In certain particulars the data drawn from these counties can be compared with data secured from a limited analysis of 5,677 churches in 196 counties. In general the conclusions drawn from the smaller number of churches are applicable to the larger number and so may fairly be regarded as typical of the country as a whole. The proportion of the total number of aided churches in the 196 counties is slightly lower than in the twenty-five counties, because of the inclusion in the larger group of a proportionately larger number of Middle West and Prairie counties; but the relative position of the different regions is the same and (except for the Range which shows a lower percentage) the regional percentages are about the same. There is very little difference in the proportions of town, village, and country churches which are aided. Twenty-five per cent. of the town, 18 per cent. of the village and 19 per cent. of the country churches are subsidized. The proportion of town churches aided is obviously higher than the average, because a disproportionate number of the town churches studied are in markedly missionary areas. In the 196 counties, 18 per cent. of the town churches are aided, which is about the average. In each of these three groups the proportion aided varies regionally in virtually the same way as was indicated for all churches combined.

Distribution of Aided Churches by Denominations

The aided churches in these twenty-five counties are drawn from thirty different denominations and represent 23 per cent. of the total number of their churches. Several other denominations are present in the counties but do not happen to aid any of their churches.

Considering those denominations which have as many as twenty-five subsidized churches in the aggregate, and making certain combinations of closely related denominations (as combining the churches of the various Lutheran synods), we have the following:

TABLE XX

PROPORTION OF CHURCHES IN TWENTY-FIVE COUNTIES RECEIVING HOME MISSION AID, BY DENOMINATIONS

	Total Number of Churches	*Number Aided*	*Per Cent. Aided*
Protestant Episcopal	47	23	49
M. E. South	69	30	42
M. E.	268	73	27
Lutheran (various synods)	57	14	25
Congregational	39	9	23
Presbyterian, U. S. A.	82	16	20
Baptist, South Convention	77	11	14
Baptist, North Convention	90	10	11
Disciples and Church of Christ	48	3	6
All others	111	22	20

The Problem of Competition in Home Mission Aid

In order to get a practical definition of competition it was considered to exist where there was more than one Protestant church within the same town or village; or where, unless some physical barrier intervened, a country church was within five miles of another Protestant church. Obviously such a definition might be unfair if it were held to assume that such competition was necessarily injurious or undesirable. There is often need for more than one church in a town or village or within an open country area described by a radius of five miles. The above, however, gives a workable principle.

In this sense only thirty-four out of the 211 aided churches have entirely free fields. Of these thirty-four, eighteen are in the Range and eleven on the Pacific Coast, where about one-third of all the aided churches have free fields. The Range and the Pacific Coast constitute the home mission area in which the national boards, generally speaking, operate. In the rest of the country, five of 123 aided churches have free fields. This is, generally speaking, the area where state or district associations control home mission policy. Of the thirty-four non-competing churches, fifteen are in small villages and nineteen are in the open country or hamlets. Thus of the aided town churches none has a free field. Of the aided village churches 25 per cent. and of the aided country churches 15 per cent. are non-competitive.

Towns

The twenty-six aided town and small city churches are situated in twelve different communities with an average population of 5,220. In addition to their aided churches they have sixty self-supporting churches. This is, all told, one church for every 728 people and one self-supporting church for every 1,044. The theoretic proportion of churches to population, on which most denominational leaders are agreed as an abstract principle, is one church to every 1,000 people. This proportion would be practically realized in these towns and villages if there were no subsidized churches. This does not, of course, take account of the country population contiguous to these towns and cities and potentially at least included in the parishes of their churches.

Villages

The forty-five aided churches in villages which are competitive are in thirty-eight communities with an average population of 865. In addition to their forty-five aided churches they have seventy-four self-supporting churches. This is, all told, one church for every 276 people, or one self-supporting church for every 444. The fifteen village churches which do not have competition are in fifteen villages with an average population of 457.

Types of Churches

It must be understood that the mere presence of two churches in a community does not of itself signify actual competition. For one thing, they may reach, by reason of language, entirely different elements of the community. There are levels of competition occasioned by differences in polity, doctrine, service and general point of view so marked as to make coöperation difficult, under existing conditions.

Thus, to be specific, an Episcopal church and a Congregational church, or a Presbyterian church and a Baptist church, or a Methodist church and a Holy Roller church may attempt to justify competition with one another on grounds which would not be at all convincing as regards a Presbyterian and a Congregational church in competition. This being so (whether it should be so or not is another matter), these aided churches have been divided into five groups representing in general five different types of polity and point

of view. For practical purposes four groups may be considered, since one of the five happens to have only one representative, a Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene. These groups, with the number of aided churches included for each, are shown in Table XXI.

TABLE XXI

CHURCHES RECEIVING HOME MISSION AID, CLASSIFIED BY TYPES OF DENOMINATIONS

	Number of Aided Churches
Group I. Churches of denominations which emphasize the necessity of baptism by immersion	26
Group II. The churches of liturgical denominations eliminating those which exclusively use some language other than English	30
Group III. Churches exclusively using some language other than English	11
Group IV. Churches of the "eccentric" or highly emotional type	1
Group V. All other Protestant churches but principally Methodist, Congregational, and Presbyterian	143

In the discussion hereafter these groups will be referred to by the above numbers.

The thesis here is that competition within a group (except perhaps in Group III if there happen to be two churches using different foreign-languages in the same community) is less defensible than competition between churches of different groups. The limiting of competition to churches of other groups, while far from the ideal of Christian coöperation, would nevertheless be one long step along the way toward it. By the use of the above formula we arrive at the following conclusion on the amount of competition occasioned by home mission aid:

TABLE XXII

COMPETITION, IN TWENTY-FIVE COUNTIES, AMONG CHURCHES RECEIVING HOME MISSION AID, BY GROUPS

Total number of aided churches that do not compete with any church using the same language		41
Number without any competition	34	
Number that compete only with a church that uses a different language	7	
Number that compete only with churches of other groups (exclusive of churches using a different language)		41
Number that compete with *aided* churches of same group		78
Number that compete with *self-supporting* churches only of the same group		51
Total number of aided churches		211

In effect, therefore, there is no competition in about one-fifth of the cases. In another one-fifth the competition is confined to churches of other groups. In three-fifths of the cases there is competition with churches of the same group, and in 60 per cent. of these cases it is aggravated by the further fact that aided church competes with aided church. Groups I, II, and V, which include the greatest proportion of the aided churches, may be contrasted in certain of these particulars as follows:

TABLE XXIII

DEGREES OF COMPETITION IN THREE GROUPS OF CHURCHES RECEIVING HOME MISSION AID

	Group I	*Group II*	*Group V*
Per cent. without competition	11.5	3.3	19.6
Per cent. competing only with other groups	30.8	63.3	10.5
Per cent. competing with aided churches of same group	15.4	13.3	47.5
Per cent. competing with self-supporting churches only, of same group	42.3	20.0	22.4
Total per cent. competing with churches of same group	57.7	33.3	69.9

Group V includes, of course, more denominations and many more churches than either of the others and hence the churches in this group have greater opportunity for overlapping. These facts warrant several observations:

Missionary Motives

(1) Service to unserved communities plays rather an insignificant part in home mission policy as exemplified in these counties. In the Range and Pacific Coast areas, where the large mission boards chiefly operate in town and country fields, service is the motive in one-third of the communities to which aid is extended. In the Middle West, South, and East, where mission work is chiefly financed by self-supporting state organizations, this motive operates in only five out of 123 instances. East and West the controlling motive seems to be to provide a particular type of religious organization and services irrespective of the possible disadvantages which may result from religious division within the community.

(2) Granted that there are essential differences in religious values among these groups sufficient to justify inter-group competition, the fact remains that competition with churches of the same

group is a dominant factor of home mission policy. It controls in more than three-fifths of the total number of cases. The question arises as to whether there is a sufficient difference in religious values between say, the churches of two different Lutheran synods, or between a Congregational and a Presbyterian church, or a Congregational and a Methodist Episcopal church to justify such competition. As between the three groups here considered, the competition of this sort appears in one-third of the cases in Group II, in 58 per cent. of Group I, and in 70 per cent. of Group V. While the total number of cases here is not large, considering the selection of the counties, there is no apparent reason to suppose that, taken as a whole, it is not a fairly representative sample.

Some Examples

This whole situation may be made clear by a somewhat more detailed examination of the factors for each one of the groups separately. The largest, No. V, includes 143 aided churches representing ten denominations. One-half of these are Methodist Episcopal, one-fifth are Methodist Episcopal South, one-ninth are Presbyterian, and one-sixteenth Congregationalist. These four denominations have 125 of the total. Exactly one hundred of these 143 churches are in competition with other churches of the same group. Fifteen more compete with churches of other groups only, and twenty-eight have no competition. Of the one hundred churches which compete with others of the same group, the most definite form of overlapping possible, thirty-five compete each with a single other church; eleven compete with two other churches; sixteen with three; eight with four; eight with five; eighteen with from six to ten, and four with eleven or more. The total number of other churches of the same group with which these 100 aided churches compete is 363, or an average of 3.6 other churches each. The maximum number of other churches of the same group in any instance is thirteen, but one in every seven competes with six or more. These cases of extreme competition are almost all in small rural communities with a very high proportion of churches to population. In a closely settled rural section it is hard to make out a case of real need for a home mission aided church which has as many as thirteen other churches of its own kind within five miles.

Moreover, in sixty-eight of the one hundred cases, other home mission churches of the same group are involved in this competition; and in thirty-eight of these cases more than one other aided church

is present. The maximum number of aided churches of the same group in a single community is six; but thirty aided churches have each one such aided competitor, seventeen have two, nine have three, ten have four and two have five each. The remaining thirty-two of these one hundred churches compete only with self-supporting churches. Again, it would be difficult to make out a clear case of real need for six home mission aided churches, and perhaps as many self-supporting churches, within a radius of five miles in a closely settled rural area. This multiple duplication of home mission aid in the same community is almost exclusively a phenomenon of the East, Middle West, and South.

In addition to the instances noted above, seventy-nine of these 100 churches *also* compete with churches of other groups which are present in these communities in varying numbers. In thirty-one of the seventy-nine instances where such other churches are present, home mission aid is a factor in their maintenance. In one instance there were eighteen churches of all groups in one community, including several aided churches of Group V. On the average, for each aided church of Group V these communities have a fraction more than four other Protestant churches of various sorts.

Group I contains twenty-six aided churches of six denominations. Baptists of the Northern and Southern Conventions predominate. The general run of facts here is not very dissimilar from those presented for Group V. Of these twenty-six churches, fifteen are in competition with other churches of the same group, eight compete with churches of other groups only, while three have no competition. Of the fifteen which compete with other churches of the same group, ten share their fields with but one other such church, and five with two. In four communities the six other churches involved are also aided. In all fifteen instances churches of other groups are also present in the communities and in ten cases by virtue of home mission aid. On the average, for each aided church of this group there are three other Protestant churches of various sorts within the same community.

Group II has thirty aided churches of six denominations. Twenty-three of the thirty are Protestant Episcopal. Five others are of some branch of the Lutheran Church. Even here there is intra-group competition in one-third of the cases and inter-group in two-thirds. Only one is without any competition.

On the average the communities in which these thirty aided churches are located have, for each aided church of this group, five other Protestant churches of various sorts.

Group No. III includes eleven aided churches representing six denominations and four languages. Nine of the eleven are from some branch of the Lutheran Church, one is Baptist, and one is Methodist Episcopal. Four of these churches compete with other churches using the same language, and in two instances the other church is also aided. Five are in communities having other Protestant churches but none using the same language. Two have undisputed possession of their fields.

Where Competition Centers

Of the whole number of aided churches, thirty-seven are in places of 1,500 or over. It would not be exactly true to say that competition is uniformly most acute in communities of this size, but it is usually most deeply rooted and most difficult of access. These thirty-seven churches are in twenty different places, averaging in population 3,990. In three of these towns the home missions enterprise has a vital contribution to make. In them eleven out of fourteen churches are aided. The other seventeen towns have, all told, 115 churches, or an average of nearly seven per town. Of these, twenty-six are aided. Without these subsidized churches there would still be eighty-nine in these towns, an average of more than five per town, or about one church for every 800 people. Of these twenty-six aided churches, four are foreign-language churches. Of the others, seven belong to Group I, eight to Group II, and seven to Group V. It will be noted, therefore, that of all of the aided churches of Groups I and II, more than one-fourth are in towns of the sort where home mission aid is least needed and hardest to justify by reason of the present abundance of churches of many sorts. Of all the aided churches of Group V, only about one in eighteen is in a town of this size.

A full discussion of the contribution to general religious welfare made by home mission aid will be found in each of the published regional and community surveys of this series. The details given there need not be recapitulated here. It is quite apparent, however, that in these counties, with the exception of a few where economic conditions are hardest and social and religious conditions are the least developed, most of the home mission aid which is now granted could be withdrawn without any danger whatsoever of leaving communities with inadequate religious facilities. Such withdrawal of aid might perhaps discourage a perpetuation of injurious division and strife. Aside from any possible loss in denominational prestige,

which a purely objective study such as this cannot undertake to measure, on a careful examination of all the data at hand it seems that 149 of the 211 aided churches in these counties might be dispensed with to the general advantage of the religious life in their communities and to the greater glory of the Kingdom of God.

Amount of Aid

The average subsidy granted these aided churches is $216 per church. This is within $12 of the average for the 196 counties. By groups the averages are as follows:

Group I	$403.00
Group II	236.00
Group III	212.00
Group V	179.00

The individual denominations which have the largest number of aided churches in these counties, compare in their average subsidies as follows: The Northern Baptists, with an average of $470 top the list. The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America has $380. Southern Baptists average $327, United Brethren $304, the Congregationalists, $251, Protestant Episcopal, $201, Methodist Episcopal South, $164, and Methodist Episcopal, $118. The averages of the two last named are obviously in accord with the policy of these denominations in maintaining many small churches near together combined in circuits where naturally the average subsidy per church is small, as contrasted with that of certain denominations, for example, the Presbyterians, which have a more highly centralized policy. The average salaries paid are, of course, also a factor in the size of subsidy; but this will be taken up at a later point. The highest regional average is shown by the South, with the Range second, Pacific Coast third, Middle West fourth, and the Colonial last. This order is entirely explicable, with the exception of the place of the South.

Length of Grants

Information is available, for 145 fields, as to the length of time that home mission aid has been continuously received. The variation is from a fraction of a year to more than fifty years. The figures are often suggestive. Churches which have received aid continuously for long periods are usually of one or the other of

two sorts. Comparatively few are churches established and maintained from motives of unselfish service to needy and otherwise neglected communities where financial resources are meager and where the local constituency is too small or too poor to support church work on an adequate basis. Other churches, which have been long aided—and these are by far the larger number—are maintained for denominational reasons in communities which do not have any other reason for them. Aid must be granted for extended periods because the communities will not, as a whole, support them, and their own constituency remains too small to do so. Those churches which have been aided for a comparatively few years may be of either of these sorts or of the kind that eventually develop into self-supporting churches.

For the whole number of churches, the average period during which aid has been granted is a little more than eight years. About one-half the number have received aid for three years or a shorter time, but about one-seventh have received it for twenty years or more. The average period by groups is as follows:

Group I	5 years
Group II	15 years
Group III	16 years
Group V	7 years

The average of the last group is brought up by nine churches, four Methodist and five Presbyterian, which have been aided for exceptionally long periods. The other eighty-eight churches of this group for which information is available, have an average of less than five years. The high averages of Groups II and III are to be expected and coincide with their general policy.

Local Financing

On the whole the home mission churches do about as well for themselves financially, relative to their membership strength, as do the self-supporting churches similarly located. Home mission aid does not appear to be to any considerable extent a substitute for local effort. In no case does the average per capita giving for the aided churches fall markedly below the general county average, while in many counties and nationally it exceeds it. For all aided churches, the average per capita amount given for all church purposes is $22.31. Of the total amount expended, 48 per cent. is for ministers' salaries, 18 per cent. for benevolences, the remainder for miscellaneous purposes relating to local support. Quite naturally the

benevolence proportion is lower than the average for self-supporting churches.

Of the total amount which is paid for ministers' salaries in these aided churches, a little more than one-third is provided from mission funds. That is to say, on the average, for every dollar provided by mission agencies the local church provides two dollars for salaries and a little more than two dollars additional for benevolences and other purposes. This is a good record.

Financial Methods

Barely one-half of the aided churches employ a budget system. About the same proportion use weekly envelopes and an annual every-member canvass. In all these particulars these churches are below the average. It is, however, in accord with general observation that home mission churches are usually less thoroughly organized from the financial point of view than are the more successful self-supporting churches. This is one of the reasons why they continue to be home mission churches, as may be deduced from the fact that of the churches which have been continuously aided for ten years or more the percentage making an every-member canvass is considerably lower than is the per cent. for those that have been aided for less than ten years. There is a growing tendency with home mission boards to require the adoption of adequate financial methods in churches to which aid is granted, in order to weed out of the list of the aid-receiving churches those in which long-continued subsidies have developed a mendicant spirit and which regularly secure grants because it is easier to do so than to put their own local finances on a thoroughly businesslike basis.

Church Membership

The average total membership of all aided churches is fifty-five, and the average resident active membership is thirty-eight. The active membership is 69 per cent. of the reported total. These averages are below the general membership averages for the counties surveyed in which the average total membership for all churches is ninety-nine, and for all country churches, seventy-five. There is a fairly wide range of variation in the membership of these aided churches, running all the way from one to 259. Thirty-one per cent. have twenty-five members or fewer. Twenty-four per cent. have from twenty-six to fifty members. Thirty-two per cent. have from fifty-one to 100; 9 per cent. from 101 to 150; and 4 per cent.,

over 150. Such distribution of membership may be regarded as quite typical. It is closely identical with the averages for all churches studied in this investigation and with the analysis made by several boards of home missions.

Those who have closely observed home mission work will not be surprised to note that, generally speaking, the aided churches which face no competition of any sort in their fields have an average membership approximately one-third less than the average of fifty-five of all aided churches. Where competition is stiffest membership exceeds the general average. Where a church competes with two or more churches of the same group, it averages sixty-two. Those which compete only with churches of other groups average fifty-nine. Those without competition average thirty-seven. In part this is due to the fact that the non-competitive churches are generally in small, difficult fields, whereas the multiple duplication of competition takes place in towns or areas which are, generally speaking, more sympathetic to the church and also more populous. This variation is further to be correlated with certain other facts to which references will shortly be made. Thirty per cent. of the aided churches are single-point charges, each normally having the full time of a pastor. Twenty-seven per cent. are on two-point circuits, 26 per cent. on three-point circuits, 7 per cent. on four-point circuits, and 10 per cent. on circuits of five or more points. The average for all aided churches is a little less than two and one-half churches per charge.

For the churches which are without competition in their communities the average number of churches per circuit is somewhat higher, only one-fifth being single-point charges whereas another one-fifth are either four- or five-point circuits. Of all of those aided churches which were supplied with pastors at the time of the survey, just one-half had their pastors resident within the bounds of the church parish, an additional 8 per cent. having the pastor within the same community but not resident within the local church parish. Forty-two per cent. have non-resident pastors. In most cases these ministers live adjacent to some church which they serve; but so far as nearly one-half of the whole number of churches are concerned, the minister is non-resident. For the 196 counties, the proportion with resident pastors is somewhat less than this. The proportion of resident pastors is lowest among the churches which are without competition. Of these, only 38 per cent. have resident pastors. It is not uncommonly the policy to put the most resources and the fullest services into the competitive rather than into non-

competitive points. This fact shows clearly in the generally poor record of the non-competitive churches.

Pastoral Service

Home mission churches have even less stability of pastoral service than others. The whole number have averaged approximately four different pastors each during the last ten years. Only 6 per cent. have retained the same pastor throughout the decade. About one-fifth have had two pastors each. Over one-half have had from three to five different pastors and about one-fifth have had six different pastors or more. An average pastorate which is not to exceed two and one-half years does not provide a sufficient continuity of service to insure steady development of a consistent program. This rapid turn-over of ministers defeats the very ends of home missions.

Evangelistic Returns

The total number of new members received during the year preceding the survey was 1,250, representing a gross gain of about 10 per cent. of the previous membership. Fifty-seven per cent. of these members were received on confession of faith, 43 per cent. by letter from other churches. The gain on confession of faith was thus about 6 per cent. of the previous membership. This is not an impressive record. The problem of a continuous high level of service, difficult enough in any country church, is for many reasons accentuated in churches receiving home mission aid; and such an average gain in membership as is here shown is not sufficient to assure steady growth. For contrast, figures are available for all aided churches of one major denomination for a period of thirty years. The average annual gain on confession of faith for these churches during that period is slightly more than 11 per cent.

As shown, the maintenance of most of the 211 home mission churches could be justified only on the assumption that theoretically, at least, they are in the way of a normal membership growth. They cannot be justified on the ground of services to exceptional populations or isolated communities. If there is no chance for them to grow to be strong congregations, there is little argument in favor of their continuance. An evangelistic increase of at least 10 per cent. on the average is generally necessary in most rural communities to insure steady growth. A little less than one-half of these churches made a net gain last year. Nearly one-third remained stationary

and one-fifth had a net loss. This record is not as good as the general average in these counties.

Furthermore, most of the recorded gain was made by comparatively few churches. More than 55 per cent. of the whole number of aided churches had no additions whatever on confession of faith during the year studied. Of those reporting confessions of faith, one-fourth added only one or two members and another fourth only from three to five. Only one in ten had more than ten additions on confession for the year. A very considerable proportion of these churches are of the chronically fruitless sort from an evangelistic point of view. This fact would not of itself condemn the expenditure of home mission money in them where they have sole responsibility for religious ministry in declining communities where growth is impossible. But surely there is a strong argument against the artificial maintenance of a non-productive church for a long period of years where there is an ample number of other churches of similar sorts within easy reach.

Ten of these churches were without pastors at the time of the survey. The remaining number, 201, were served by 133 ministers, some of whom also served self-supporting churches. Somewnat less than one-half of these ministers serve single churches, the others have circuits ranging from two to six churches each. One-sixth of the ministers devote only part of their time to the work of the ministry, combining that with some other occupation. For the men giving full time to the ministry there is a very considerable range in salaries paid. From $413 without parsonage, it ranges to $2,500 with parsonage. The free use of a house is provided in eighty-seven cases. Estimating the average rental value of a parsonage at $250 a year, and adding that amount to the cash salary of a minister for whom a house is provided in order to obtain a basis for fair comparison, the average salary paid is $1,318. That is to say, the average salary is equivalent to $1,068 cash and the free use of a house. The actual cash average, irrespective of whether a free parsonage is provided is $1,165. While such a salary is obviously too little at current living costs, it compares favorably with the average salary paid in most of the counties surveyed. There is, therefore, no general discrimination in salaries against these ministers because they serve churches receiving home mission aid.

Forty-five per cent. of the ministers keep automobiles, 6 per cent. have horses. Forty-nine per cent. have neither. As to the education of ministers, there is nothing particular to differentiate this group of ministers from those serving other town and country

churches. About one-third of the whole number are graduates both of theological seminary and of college. About another one-third are graduates of either one or the other but not both; and about one-third have had no professional training except for four men who are now college students.

Conclusion

In passing final judgment on the series of facts recorded, certain things must be brought to mind. The first, that no one denomination or group of denominations can be singled out as sinning above others in any of these matters. There are degrees, of course, but the tradition and the system developed in years when the denominational consciousness was relatively more keen and the sense of community responsibility relatively less so, grip all without exception. In the second place, these aided churches are subject to the same sort of disabilities that affect other town and country churches. Small numbers, meagerness of evangelistic return, and narrowness of program are not alone the characteristics of aided churches, but are the blight which has affected so many town and country churches in recent years. It might be expected that home mission churches, having behind them the influence and impetus of state or national organizations which invest money in them, would illustrate a higher efficiency and a higher ideal of services than other churches. But there is nothing in the history of home missions *per se* to work any such miracle in the change of the attitude of local church forces. In the third place, so far as home mission organizations themselves are concerned, in passing judgment upon them, the limitations to which attention was called in the first paragraph of this chapter must be borne in mind. This phase of home mission work shows less of the motive of unselfish service and more of the motive of denominational aggrandizement than any other phase. There are great areas of missionary activity in which the motives which have here seemed to control have a greatly diminished importance. This fact must be placed to the credit of the missionary organizations in casting up the final account. Taking it all in all, however, the mildest judgment that can be passed is that it is unfortunate that home mission agencies still so readily lend themselves to the perpetuation of local religious divisions where not only are the broad community purposes not served, but where the interest of the denomination itself is frequently not maintained in the building up of strong, growing, effectively working organizations.

Chapter Summary

This discussion concerns chiefly a single aspect of home mission work, viz., the subsidizing of churches in American villages or country neighborhoods. The data covers twenty-five counties.

Every fifth church in these counties receives home mission aid.

Only thirty-four out of 211 aided churches are entirely free from competition. As an aid in measuring the effects of competition, this discussion divides the churches into five groups, each group representing, in general, a common point of view. It is assumed that intra-group competition is less defensible than inter-group competition.

In effect, there is no competition in about one-fifth of the cases; there is competition between churches of different groups in one-fifth of the cases, and competition with churches of the same group in three cases out of every five; and in more than half of these cases aided church competes with aided church.

Competition is more severe and less defensible in the older settled parts of the country. It is less important in the more distinctly missionary territory.

The use of home mission money to further competition is most difficult to justify and hardest to deal with in the larger villages and the towns.

One hundred and forty-nine of the 211 aided churches in these counties could be dispensed with without essential loss.

The average subsidy granted an aided church is $216 a year. By denominations the average ranges up to $470 a church.

The average period during which aid has been given the individual church is eight years. Half the churches, however, have been aided for three years or less, one-seventh for twenty years or more.

In general the aided churches raise as much money per capita as the self-supporting churches.

In general, the aided churches that face the stiffest competition are most energetically promoted and have the most pastoral oversight. Non-competitive fields are apt to be comparatively neglected.

A considerable proportion of the aided churches are of the chronically non-productive sort.

The average salary of pastors in churches receiving home mission aid is about the average for all town and country ministers.

CHAPTER VII

Religious Education in the Rural Church School

RELIGIOUS education is the corner-stone upon which must be built the Church of the future. Through religious education, the ever-rising generation is reached and helped to lay the foundations of its religious life.

Nevertheless the teaching function of the Church, in town and country at least, is too largely neglected. The Federal Religious Census indicates that one out of every four churches is without any Sunday school. In the counties studied, the proportion was slightly better, being one out of every five.[1] Yet the Sunday school is the most fundamental and far-reaching development in religious education. For about two centuries it has commended itself to the Christian judgment of the world; and in America great interdenominational and denominational agencies for its promotion attest the fact. That one out of every five churches should lack even the semblance of a Sunday school is a sobering circumstance, especially when it is noted that less than one-quarter of those without such schools belong to denominations opposed to having them.

It means that many rural boys and girls are being deprived of a most important preparation for Christian life. This neglect is nation-wide; but it is more evident in the South than in any other region. The irrigated sections of the Pacific Coast and the prosperous Middle West lead in Sunday school organization. In these fortunate regions, nineteen out of every twenty churches have such work. The Colonial states and those in the Rocky Mountains come next, and approach the average. Where the lack described does obtain, every effort should be made by existing schools to reach the entire community, and especially the children and adolescents. There ought to be interdenominational agreements to bring this about.

[1] The figures in this chapter are drawn not only from the twenty-five counties which have formed the basis of practically the entire study, but from forty-three additional counties which were tabulated at the close of the Interchurch World Movement work for a denominational board of religious education. Except where stated, therefore, the figures in this chapter cover nearly 2,500 schools in sixty-eight counties, located in forty-three states; which counties have a total population of 1,138,827. The figures from this smaller sample of counties do not quite agree with those in Chapter III, in which national deductions were drawn on the basis of 179 counties.

"The Three Types"

There are three types of Sunday schools. The first is the usual variety organized and directed under the auspices of the church. The second type is a mission Sunday school organized in some locality where there is no church, but under the care of a neighboring congregation, and, therefore, to a certain extent at least, under the supervision of the minister. The third type is the union Sunday school unattached to any church. This interesting type is usually found in isolated places or in neglected neighborhoods; and it was largely prevalent from necessity in the early pioneer days of the West. It is also to be met with in populous rural neighborhoods near larger cities. The city churches have failed to extend their parishes, though often they have killed the country churches. Parents of the children are not willing to send them any great distance to the Sunday school. The absence of churches, even in populous areas, accounts for the union schools. Where there are enough people bound by some neighborhood tie, such a school is likely to be organized, even though in a populous area. This particular kind of unattached school is, however, distinctly in the minority.

The mission schools and the detached schools together form 12 per cent. of the total number. There are, however, three times as many detached schools as there are mission schools. These unattached schools have been promoted occasionally by local initiative; but generally through missionary endeavor, either on the part of representatives of the American Sunday School Union or, as is more often the case, by denominational Sunday school missionaries. In this way denominations have sought to extend their ministry into new communities or inaccessible places and have attempted to drive an entering wedge into localities otherwise untouched by the forces of religion.

Such a plan obtained, and is defensible in a new country under frontier conditions; and the missionaries in charge of this work are among the most heroic who labor for the extension of the Kingdom in America. It is, however, inadequate where a community has settled down definitely to its agricultural life. Under such conditions the separate Sunday school becomes an obstacle to further religious progress.

Instead of being the spur to ambition, it becomes a check. Of necessity, people accept the benefits; but they do not manifest enough enterprise for future development or for unforeseen contingencies.

The Sunday school missionary cannot visit a school more often than five or six times a year. His work is unrelated to that of the churches, even of his own denomination, within the very counties in which he operates. Where work grows sufficiently to warrant it, the missionary is supposed to, and often does, organize a congregation. But too frequently he must spread his efforts thinly over such an amount of territory that it becomes impossible to bring a community to the point of organizing a church.[2] The alternative is, when the proper time comes, for the pastor of the nearest church or the denominational missionary agency to devote enough time to help the people to expand their organization into a full-grown church.

These unattached Sunday schools are seldom as large as the church schools, and this is but natural. Those connected with preaching points have an average enrollment of forty-three; those which are entirely separate average forty, or half the average enrollment of the church Sunday schools, which is eighty. In the average enrollment of church Sunday schools, with which the discussion will hereafter deal, the Pacific Coast again leads with 103, and again the Middle West is second with eighty-three. The other sections number approximately seventy-eight; and again the South is last, with seventy-five. Small as these enrollments may seem, they are not only considerable in the aggregate but they are encouraging in themselves. When it is remembered that half the town and country churches in America have fewer than fifty active members each, it will be apparent that although a third of these churches have no church schools, the figures still indicate the strength of the Sunday school and prove how valuable an adjunct it can become in church work.

In Town and Country

It is the membership in the town schools, of course, which brings up the general average; but of the total number only 7 per cent. are located in towns. Two-fifths are in villages, and more than half are located in the country. The 7 per cent. of schools located in the towns have 15 per cent. of the total church-school enrollment. Forty-six per cent. of the enrollment is credited to the village schools, and 39 per cent. to those in the country. The average en-

[2] For a fuller discussion of the work of Sunday school missionaries under favorable and unfavorable conditions, and a suggested method of meeting the difficulty here studied, the reader is referred to "A Church and Community Survey of Pend Oreille County, Washington," pp. 42, 43, 47-51; and "Irrigation and Religion," pp. 80, 104-108.

rollment for town, village and country church schools is 148, 95, and 58 respectively.

While town schools are always largest, with the village next and the country smallest, there seems to be no similar trend in the figures for attendance. Despite the handicaps of distance and sometimes of poor roads in bad weather, there are many counties in which the country Sunday schools show a higher proportion of attendance at any given session than the town schools. For all counties the towns lead only because of the excellent record of a few counties. There are two reasons for this: first, the country church school's session is one of the few breaks in the life of the country child; secondly, it is not unusual for whole families to attend, and to wait for the church services which follow.

In many rural areas the Sunday school is, on two or three Sundays a month, the only religious service. Where the town churches do lead in attendance it is often because of the excellence of their work rather than because of the proximity of their scholars. It is not possible to determine precisely the contributory features that lead to a high attendance in successful schools. It is found, however, that where there is a good equipment there is also apt to be not only a good program but trained teachers. Wherever any two of these factors are found, and certainly where all three are present, the attendance seems to increase rapidly in proportion to the total enrollment. For the total group of schools, the average attendance of those in the town is 70 per cent. of the enrollment. For the village schools it is 63 per cent. of the enrollment; and for those in the country 66 per cent. For all counties and all types of schools the ratio of attendance to enrollment is 64 per cent.

The Church and Its School

Of late years the ideal has been set for the Sunday school to equal the church in its membership, excluding of course home and cradle roll departments. With the ever-increasing and proper emphasis upon Sunday school classes for adults, this is no impossible goal. Anything far short of it raises the suspicion that the Church is not seriously working at the task of religious education. On the other hand, if for any length of time the enrollment of the Sunday school should exceed that of the church it would seem to show that, except in new and rapidly growing communities, the church is neglecting its task of evangelism. The Sunday school often establishes the first contact between the church and the newcomer. Per-

haps this newcomer may prove to be a tenant, or a New American.

In the counties studied, the enrollment of the Sunday school equals 84 per cent. of the church membership. In the Middle West it is only 63 per cent. It is, however, reduced by the counties having a predominance of the older immigration with its foreign-language churches and its stress upon religious education only for the very young. In the South the ratio is 77 per cent. On the Range and the Pacific Coast enrollment in Sunday schools outstrips church membership by 7 and 20 per cent. respectively; a situation that creates an opportunity and a challenge for the Church.

In equipment, both physical and pedagogical, the rural Sunday schools are woefully lacking, in the light of modern standards of religious education. Three out of every four meet in either one or two rooms. Where there is a second room it is set aside almost exclusively for the primary department, which is as it should be. Apart from this, the Sunday school, like the old-fashioned little red schoolhouse, has all its classes in one room. The Sunday school has, however, an advantage over the public school in that usually no two classes have the same teacher; it is at a disadvantage in that it reaches its average pupil for a maximum of only fifty-two hours a year, provided it is a school that is open all the year. Too many of the Sunday schools hibernate during certain seasons because of impassable roads. Only 80 per cent. are on the job every Sunday out of the fifty-two.

Even when a school has more than two rooms, modern equipment is notably absent, and the contrast between week-day and Sunday instruction is of the sort that would impress the pupil with the idea that the latter is of little relative importance. Sand tables, stereopticons, maps, attractive interior decorations, proper pictures hung at proper heights, all these things and many other undisputed fundamentals of modern educational work are rarely found.

"They That Be Teachers Shall Shine"

This handicap is imposed partly because the teachers are volunteers, with no appreciation or knowledge of these things, chosen because of their willingness rather than because of their ability. The assets of the average Sunday school teacher are a certain amount of loyalty, piety, consecration and a lesson quarterly.[3] Less than one school in eleven has a teacher-training class of even the most ele-

[3] See Athearn, "The Indiana Survey of Religious Education," Vols. I and II.

mentary character. Religious education cannot be put upon a proper footing on this basis. It is classed as a thing distinctly inferior, even in the mind of the boy or girl pupil, when compared with the training offered by the week-day school. Moreover, this type of teaching effectually prevents any considerable extension of the hopeful movement to give high-school credit for Bible study.

From every point of view it is necessary to improve the preparation and the pedagogical standards of the teaching force of our Sunday schools, even though the teachers are volunteers. Nor is this impossible. A few churches have proved that the problem is worth solving. It is interesting to note that the region which makes the best showing in this regard is the Pacific Coast. Closely following is the Rocky Mountain area. In this latter area, where conditions are hardest and needs are greatest, the Sunday schools are improving in their personnel. In some counties in other regions there is not a single teacher-training class; and in some states there is an average of but one for every twenty schools.

About one church out of three has ventured along new lines, such as better equipment, trained teachers, and graded curriculum; and it is significant that in the last five years this policy is producing the larger proportion of recruits trained to enter upon a professional Christian career.[4] This group averages more than twice as many per school as the other. In all, the 958 church schools in these counties have sent 295 persons into professional Christian service in the last decade; but all those 295 persons were from only 173 of the schools. In the course of the last decade, 785 schools have sent no recruits into professional service. It is reasonable to suppose that if the pupils in the poorer schools could have more advantages they would show as keen an interest and as creditable a response as the pupils in the better-managed schools.

An encouraging feature in the situation is that there has been a marked increase in the number of people who have entered the various branches of developed Christian service. In the first half of the decade the number was only ninety. In the last five years 205 have entered. This increase has been shared in by every region except the Midwest where the rate has remained stationary. The causes for this increase cannot be determined by this survey. Credit is given by some to the denominational campaigns, and particularly to the Interchurch World Movement. Others feel that the spiritual after-results of the war are partly responsible.

There are interesting variations between the regions in the num-

[4] On this point the figures cover only the twenty-five counties.

ber of recruits which have been sent into the active service. The Pacific Coast averages one recruit for every 1.25 schools; the Middle West one for every 2.18. The other regions are in the neighborhood of one for every four schools, with the exception of the South which has a record of one recruit for every eleven schools. On the basis of present enrollment the figures are very much the same. The Pacific Coast and middle western states have produced one professional Christian worker for every 200 of their present Sunday school membership. The South averages one to every 1,150; while the remaining regions range between one for every 286 and one for every 291. Of the 295 Christian workers who have gone from these schools in the last decade, 141 have been from village schools. The open country has furnished 113 and the town forty-one.

"Train Up a Child in the Way He Should Go"

As to curricula, most schools are ungraded save roughly as to age. The same lesson is taught in all grades. Only 30 per cent. of schools use graded lessons, and many of these confine their use to the beginners, to primary and perhaps to junior grades. With the departmental system grading is possible in all but the smallest schools.

Sunday school curriculum has a definite influence and justifies the use of graded instruction as far as it is possible. For instance, 30 per cent. of the schools studied have regular missionary instruction at least once a month, and many of them oftener. Taken as a whole, the churches in which missions play a part in the Sunday school curriculum give per capita 30 per cent. more to missions than those churches in which there is no mission study. There are, of course, exceptions; but, pursuing the analysis down to a county basis, it is found that a majority of the counties return a similar result.[5]

One reason for the general weakness in many of these schools is that the minister, who is supposed to be the trained leader of the congregation and its organization, is seldom able to devote much time to the Sunday school. Unless there can be paid directors of religious education—and some country churches have such workers—the results are uncertain. More than one-third of the rural pastors do nothing in or with their Sunday schools, usually because they cannot reach them regularly on account of the many appointments on the circuit. It is a situation with significance for the country. Barely half of the ministers of country churches are able to attend their Sunday schools. More than a quarter of those who

[5] From this point the data covers only the twenty-five counties.

serve village churches are similarly handicapped. There are 604 of the church Sunday schools, or barely 60 per cent., which have their minister regularly with them. In forty-eight he acts as superintendent; and in less than a third of these he also teaches. In two-thirds of the total number of these schools, the minister takes his place as a regular teacher. In seventy-six he confines himself to reviewing the lesson. In sixty-six schools, the minister is present as an attendant or substitute teacher when occasion requires.

The effect of ministerial residence on the program of the church Sunday school is striking. Forty-five per cent. of such schools are attached to congregations which have either the full or the part time of a resident minister. This 45 per cent. have more than twice as many classes to prepare for church membership; three times as many life-work recruits; three times as many teacher-training classes, and one-third again as much missionary education as the 55 per cent. which have non-resident ministers. The pity of it is that so many of the schools are not fully utilizing the potential leadership of their resident ministers. For instance, only 30 per cent. of the churches with resident ministers have classes to prepare for church membership; only one-third have missionary education; and only one out of every four has ever furnished a life-work recruit. The striking difference between the churches with resident pastors and those without, makes all the more startling the failure of the majority of the more fortunate congregations either to utilize their leadership or to respond to it.

"We Are Every One Members, One of Another"

Another test of educational efficiency lies in that departure of the Church along the line of more intensive, graded instruction for a special age-group, namely the class to prepare for church membership, called by different names in different denominations. Eighteen and one-half per cent. of the churches have such classes; 81.5 per cent. do not have them. The churches with this important feature of religious education registered an average net gain per year of 11.8 members and those without any class of the kind reported a net gain of 2.8 members. Varying in degree, this record held for every region and for every county with the exception of one. In other words, out of every 200 churches the thirty-nine with classes to prepare for church membership registered a larger net gain per year than the 161 churches without such classes. On the basis of membership, the result is the same. Churches with classes for age-

groups are just 20 per cent. larger than those without; but they add four times as many members.

Religion may be a matter of faith and emotional experience; but though it may perhaps be caught like smallpox by exposure, it cannot be sustained by anything but a solid foundation for the faith that is within the convert. The failure to supply such a foundation is one of the great weaknesses of religious education. Classes in preparation for church membership give the necessary grounding. Their value is indisputable. The recommendation and the moral of these figures is clear.

The appeal of the Sunday school to the purely farm population is of interest. In every region except the South the proportion of church school enrollment from farm homes is less than the proportion of people on farm homes in the total population. The difference varies from 1 per cent. in the Pacific States to 13.5 in the Colonial. Adding the farm membership of the separate schools, it appears that, except in the Colonial area, the farm home supports religious education slightly better than do the other elements in the rural population. Nor is this surprising. The Sunday school is the layman's church. The minister is too frequently not present and of necessity the farmer responds and develops leadership.

It is difficult to account for the situation in the Colonial area, where the farmer's family is in a decided minority. Distance between the home and the Sunday school is undoubtedly a factor in sparsely settled areas. Elsewhere poor roads and bad weather are often the reasons advanced. Antagonism between the trade centers and the country appears here and there. The exact situation in this connection, as it affects religious education, is discussed in Chapter IV. Regardless of the conditions, church Sunday schools should by all means determine whether they are reaching the farm children. District or county Sunday school associations should, whenever possible, work at the task of securing the facts on this point.

The importance of the question becomes the more apparent when it is remembered that, while the urban population in the United States now exceeds the rural, something it has not done before in our history, the census also shows that there are two and a half million more children in our villages and country districts than in the towns and cities. The greater part of the rising generation will receive its religious training in the country; and if we may judge by the past this means that a majority of our future leaders will be country-trained. Will it be the training that will fit them to lead?

Standards and Ambitions

One thing is evident. With all the splendid progress that is being made in religious education in curriculum, in training of teachers and in types of building, the real problem of the small school with one or two rooms is largely untouched. It is easy to condemn this type of school, and it is right to do so. The average church is too easily satisfied with its own standards and ambitions. To maintain such a Sunday school would seem to be a mere gesture—a matter of ecclesiastical fashion as a church bell may be, or an organ. Judged by any scientific standard, it is obsolete. But three out of every five schools are of this unambitious type. Half a dozen or so classes share the church auditorium; and it becomes a modern Babel, with the teachers competing for the attention of their classes each one of which is distracted by the noise of its neighbor. The enrollment and resources of such schools are small; yet it is with these schools that reform must begin. The plans and programs thus far announced by leaders in the field of religious education have no stirring message to these Sunday schools.

A final observation is justified. The church Sunday school should extend the scope of its work and influence. In these sixty-eight counties only 14 per cent. of the total population is affiliated with Sunday schools of any type. At the best, the basic survey of these twenty-five counties nets only 18 per cent., but even this figure is lower than the proportion of church membership to population. Yet two of these counties, in states as widely separated as Washington and Pennsylvania, enroll almost 30 per cent. of their population in their church schools. In both instances Sunday school membership exceeds church membership. In near-by counties, in which similar general conditions prevail, the records are as low as 6, 8, and 11 per cent. Obviously the development and the effort have been unequal. One-quarter of the schools under consideration report that they make efforts to increase membership and attendance, but almost exclusively these efforts are confined to contests and rewards.

If religious education has to stoop to such meretricious methods to bribe and tease its constituency into investing thirty-four out of a possible fifty-two hours a year in its activities, then religious education is in a bad way. Does not the solution rather lie in the organizing of personnel, curriculum and program to such a point that they will compel attention? This organization was achieved in Columbia County, Pa., which offers the best record of the counties in the proportion of its population enrolled in church Sunday schools,

but which still leaves much to be desired. There are communities in this Pennsylvania county in which from three-fourths to nine-tenths of the population are interested in the Sunday school, including of course the Cradle Roll and Home Departments. Such a triumph in the country should give widespread encouragement.

The secret of success lies in this instance in the hearty application of modern ideas and methods. This Pennsylvania county excels in trained teachers. It leads all others in organized classes. Most of these classes have some form of social program. The County Sunday School Association is an ambitious organization; it has employed a secretary, and its program includes close and active coöperation with the County Farm Bureau and the county schools.[6] The record in the far western county was made chiefly because the Sunday schools, though new and in many cases feeble, furnished the one constructive agency in the community reaching all age- and sex-groups. They are under the supervision of a denominational Sunday school missionary who devoted almost all his time to this one county, and who was able to organize a constructive plan and to concentrate his energies upon its fulfilment and functioning. This result was due to the fact that he had no other charges such as a presbytery or district which might include from eight to a dozen counties.

The various steps in this campaign for the Sunday school and religious education remain for experts to detail. The studies that have been undertaken reveal certain outstanding needs.

First: the facts should be broadcast until they reach administrative officers and those concerned with the direction and inspiration of our small country schools.

Second: Sunday school missionaries should be so distributed that their territories do not overlap, and their energies should be devoted to intensive rather than to extensive work. The Sunday schools in the centers, each with a group of trained leaders or teachers, should be responsible for outlying communities that are not adequately served by the forces of religion.

Third: there is the greatest need for more modern equipment comparable to that used in the day schools.

Fourth: the training of teachers must be greatly extended. Where possible a leadership and teacher-training school should be maintained to instruct officers, teachers, and workers in the principles of religious education as applied to their own community. Such work should be under the auspices of a Community Committee on

[6] See "The Country Church in Industrial Zones," pp. 74-75.

Protestant Religious Education which would soon find many additional fields for its activities.

Fifth: the curriculum of the church Sunday school should be restudied, adapted to more intensive work, and graded, as is possible now for even the smaller schools. The curriculum should include the regular missionary instruction and, at the proper time, a membership-training class.

Sixth: the hour-a-week program must eventually give way to week-day religious instruction. Plans under which such instruction is at present given should be studied with the peculiar and special needs of the local church and community in mind.

Seventh: this form of administration should be carried, adopted and used by all strong community-serving churches. They should employ, in addition to the pastor, one person on full time as the religious-education worker; and, if possible, at least two other teachers should be employed on part time. The person on full time should have charge of the Sunday school, carry on the Daily Vacation Bible School, have charge of week-day religious education throughout the year, lead the community class for leadership-training and in general become responsible for bringing the Church and its functions closer to its adolescent members.

Eighth: Daily Vacation Bible Schools should be promoted on a community-wide basis, especially for children under twelve years of age.

Ninth: community-serving churches responsible for large areas should regularly transport to and from the church their pupils who enter classes for religious instruction, in order to secure regularity of attendance in the Sunday school, Daily Vacation Bible School, week-day religious instruction, communicant classes and schools of missions.[7]

Tenth: individual schools and, as rapidly as possible, religious educational forces in each community should extend the scope of religious instruction until it includes an appreciable portion of the adult population as well as virtually the entire population of school age.

Eleventh: leaders in the realm of religious education should devote a large share of their thinking and planning to the small church school whose needs are largely overlooked by present theories. It may be said that a study of this subject should show whether these

[7] Proposals 8, 9, and 10 have been submitted to scores of rural leaders by Dr. Warren H. Wilson in connection with recent summer schools and have been widely approved.

or other new lines of departure in the field of religious education are effective. It is a disappointment to find that such policies are rare. Since no large amount of progressive work was found in these typical counties, it is clear that the small school has not yet learned to apply modern pedagogical principles to religious education. The encouraging results obtained in one county by intensive work have been alluded to and the results described. In other places daily vacation Bible classes running three to four weeks were found; sometimes week-day religious education, either with or without the coöperation of the public school, was found in operation.

Valuable and suggestive as these efforts are from the point of view of the surveys, their number, less than 1 per cent. of the whole, is too insignificant, and their period of existence too short, to permit of their results being appraised. These omissions and this indifference are indicated by the great needs that emerged in the course of the study. The data here presented, however, sufficiently prove the need for a progressive policy that will compel the cooperative interest of the Church and its organizations and lead to an application of these principles to the community in which it serves.

Chapter Summary

Between 20 and 25 per cent. of the town and country churches have no Sunday school.

There are three types of Sunday schools: those attached to churches; mission schools running under the auspices of the parent church, and independent union schools. The average enrollment of rural church schools ranges from 103 on the Pacific Coast to 75 in the South. The average enrollment in the mission and union schools is 42. For the whole country, the average enrollment per church school is 80.

The average enrollment of town schools is 148; of village schools 95 and country schools 58. Two-fifths of the rural schools are in villages; half are in the country and one-tenth in the towns.

The attendance averages two-thirds of the enrollment.

Four-fifths of the schools are open the year round.

The more modern and vigorous the program of the school, the better the average attendance is apt to be.

The average school is woefully lacking in modern educational equipment.

The teachers are for the most part untrained; lessons are ungraded, except in some of the younger class-groups.

Regular missionary instruction in the Sunday school has a real influence on missionary giving in the church.

Barely half the church schools obtain the regular attendance of their minister.

The schools which produce the greatest number of church members and of life-work recruits for Christian service, are the schools which have the leadership of an active resident minister.

The number of those entering full-time professional Christian service in the last five years is more than double the number in the first five years of the decade.

The churches with classes to prepare for church membership are only 20 per cent. larger than those without; but they add four times as many members per year.

The real problem of the average country Sunday school is largely untouched by present programs.

CHAPTER VIII

Equipment and Finance

I. *Equipment.*

NO matter what material is used in the construction of a church, the building is not so much a material symbol of wood, brick or stone as it is a spiritual symbol to the people who have paid for its construction. As to the function and purpose of a church, the building is more than a material fact; it is a witness to the capacity of people to invest in religion, and to give a concrete and practical form to their idea of religion. This capacity is determined not alone by their resources, though these are an important consideration, but also by their individual and corporate interests.

What idea of religion in rural America would a visitor from Europe glean if he were to study nothing but our church buildings? Three out of every four of these have only one or two rooms each. How different from the outward appearance of the churches, or even of the wayside chapels of Europe, would the visitor find the bare, board exterior of this, our average church. And its interior would be, for him, devoid alike of either dignity or beauty. Instead, there would be the bare floor, the hard pews, the pine or golden oak pulpit set, and the asthmatic "organ." Manifestly, structures of this type, designed as buildings in which people may assemble periodically for worship, and to hear the word of God expounded, are a prized legacy from a day that is gone. The story of the pioneers who first cleared the land of our richly endowed continent, who met first for religious services in dugout, log-cabin, or the kitchen of a neighbor, and who enjoyed the privilege of religious service only on those rare occasions when the circuit rider arrived, is well known.

Needs: Functional and Religious

The growth of the church building from the early practical type to a structure containing three, six or even as many as two dozen rooms, evidences the expanding vision of the people as to the social

and religious functions of the Church. Almost invariably the first room to be added has been the kitchen; and along with it a space for the primary department of the Sunday school. The next development took place in the field of religious education. There were added separate study rooms for the Sunday school classes. Another feature was the accommodation of the Ladies' Aid Society. Last and rarest of all has come the utilization of the church fabric and its facilities for a community service program. Consolidated schools and their intensive use by the community as a whole, adults as well as minors, have shown the way to the Church. Sunday school classrooms are being turned over to the Boy Scouts or Knights of King Arthur for week-day use. The Camp Fire Girls or the Girl Scouts have another room. Here and there a gymnasium has been added.

It appears that, as a rule, the fewer rooms a church building has the smaller the group of people which it serves. Congregations that worship in buildings of one or two rooms average a resident membership of sixty-seven; while those with three or more rooms possess an average membership of 138. In the Colonial Area, and on the Pacific Coast, the number of rooms per building increases rapidly after the group passes the hundred mark in membership. Elsewhere, the membership must be considerably higher before the enlargement of the church building engages its congregation. Nor is this physical relation between size of congregation and size of church building merely a matter of convenience and comfort.

It does not and cannot end with so material a limitation of size and content. Greater than the expression of the material limitations are the spiritual ones with which such congregations are involved. The difference in size of membership often affects the program of a church more than does the type of building; but if the building does express the needs and aspirations of a congregation, then it must also affect the church program. Some congregations are satisfied with a selfish, individual standard of comfort. A pew for individual use in a church for individual expression sums up their spiritual idealism. But there are many small congregations with a keen sense of Christian duty and service "unto all the world"; and nothing but a church building that will express this larger idea adequately will satisfy them. As a result, their gains in membership through the resulting enlarged contact with their environment, are the rewards of policy.

Waste versus Efficiency

The fact is what the average person would expect. It seems, however, to indicate two things: first, no church with two rooms, or with only one for that matter, need despair of adopting a modern, efficient program simply because of an inadequate plant. Some of the most successful religious enterprises in rural America are being carried on by churches of one or two rooms. They are more than justified by the fact that one-quarter of the schools meeting in such buildings have graded lessons; that more than one-fifth of them have missionary education; that nearly one-fifth are carrying on some sort of week-day program. The idea of the functions of a church can soon outgrow the physical idea which houses it. On the other hand, churches with three rooms or more better this record proportionately by from one-half to three times on all items connected with religious education and the social program.

Secondly, too many of the churches which are blessed with larger buildings fail to use them to their fullest extent: far too many Sunday school rooms are occupied merely an hour a week. Visual instruction in the Sunday school, even with the advantages of a stereopticon or even a moving-picture machine, is too often confined to highly colored pictures illustrating the Golden Text of the day to children in the primary department. It is a perfunctory use, a self-imposed limitation, as well as a waste of a spiritual and economic asset. But when a Sunday school room is used during the week by the Boy or Girl Scouts, or some kindred organization, the Church relates itself to more than one of its juvenile groups and thus becomes a factor in the religious and social lives of the young. The proportion of young people who have joined churches that are making good use of their social equipment is 20 per cent. more than the proportion of young in churches lacking equipment.

So much for its local responsibilities. But the economic obligations of a rural church to the nation should not be overlooked. The churches in these counties represent a total property valuation of more than $6,000,000, which is tax free. Tax rates in some of the counties studied are higher than 6 per cent. on assessments that are supposed to represent full valuation. In very few counties are they below the equivalent of 1 per cent. on a full valuation. It is a conservative estimate that the average contribution of Government to the average church in these counties amounts to $75 or $100 a year. It is, of course, a gift based upon an implied public or community service, the payment of which is expressible only in terms of

social value, such as character-building. Thus, there is not only the possibility of a larger use of church plants as they exist, but there is also a definite social and economic obligation apart from those higher motives of Christian service. Since under our democratic institutions State and Church are independent and respect each other, the same standards of efficient service in kind should be rendered by each. But does the Church pay its share in full religious and social service to the State?

Both Great and Small in Town and Country

As is to be expected, the largest or most costly buildings are for the most part found in towns, the less expensive in the open country. The range in values for town churches is from $1,000 to $100,000. In only two counties is the most costly town church valued at $5,000 or less. The average value for the town churches ranges from a little more than $10,000 in the Middle West to $16,342 on the Pacific Coast. The mode lies between $4,000 and $8,000. Only four town churches, all in the Middle West, are valued at less than $1,500.

Village churches seem to conform much more nearly to a type than do those of either the town or the country. The average value in the South and in the Colonial Area is a little in excess of $7,500. The Middle West, Pacific and Range Regions, respectively, follow with an average valuation that fluctuates between $3,400 and $5,600. The most costly village church in the study was found in Orange County, N. C., with a valuation of $61,000. Fifty-nine churches, one-sixth of the total number, are valued at $1,500 or less.

The country church in the Colonial Area, and in those parts of the Middle West which are largely peopled by Northern European immigrants, reflects the European tradition. It is more stable, larger and more expensively constructed than the church of any other part of America, so that the valuations in these two areas total $3,600 and 3,400 respectively, and some counties average $7,000 per church. Quite different is the country church in the South, where one- and two-room buildings predominate, and where the average valuation is slightly less than $1,500. The Pacific Coast and the Range fall between these groups. The country church in the Pacific is weaker, especially in the irrigated regions, because the stronger town and village church reflects the higher density of population and the very good roads. The average valuation is $2,100. More than one-third of the 606 county edifices are valued at less than $1,500 each, but 60 per cent. of these are in the South.

On the Range the influence of pioneer and home mission days still survives in the one-room building, largely prevalent in the country, with an average valuation of $1,670. As is to be expected, the Range has a larger number of country churches valued at less than $1,000 than can be found in either of the other groups. But the fact that the maximum valuations in several counties exceed $30,000, that almost all counties except on the Range exceed $5,000, bears witness to the fact that it is possible to erect and maintain churches of no mean kind in the open country.

II. *Finance.*

During the old days of the circuit rider and the episodic preaching service, church expenses were at a minimum, and as late as the 'eighties and 'nineties ministers in some parts of the country received much of their salary "in kind." As the cost and scale of living slowly increased the sacrifices of the country minister became correspondingly serious.

With the inception of the Laymen's Missionary Movement and the first stirrings of the interest and enthusiasm which culminated in denominational drives, a great deal of attention was paid to more efficient methods of church finance, so that to-day we have a standardized plan for most denominations calling for the formation of an annual budget, an annual every-member canvass, and a weekly envelope system to facilitate the payment of the pledges made during the canvass.

The country was not cordial to these innovations, and it is still asserted that country people are slow in adapting themselves to this system. In many parts of the country the farmer is paid for his crop only once a year, and the occasion marks a grand settlement. This custom, however, is passing; on most farms there is butter and egg money, or a small revenue from a few cows that may be kept, even in non-dairying areas. Efficient and regular financial systems have, therefore, been gaining ground.

Sixty per cent. of the churches considered in this study now operate on a budget system. Nearly half have an every-member canvass, while 48 per cent. use the weekly envelope system. In some counties the proportion of churches using some one of these three items is well over 80 per cent. In churches of the Middle West and the Colonial Areas 70 per cent. use both the weekly envelope and the budget systems. For the country as a whole, nearly one-third of the churches use all three of these aids to efficient finance.

Strangely enough, the Range states, where the difficulties of isolation are the greatest, lead the other regions in this particular, every other church having all three of these items. Possibly this is because the Range is missionary territory and some supporting boards demand efficient local administration as a prerequisite to securing home mission aid.

The Rewards of System and Method

The differences between efficiency and its absence in rural church finance are really quite striking. Apart from three village churches in the Range country, where there has been a good deal of building that ran up the per capita contributions, the churches in other regions of the United States with all three elements of financial efficiency exceed those without these approved financial methods by from 12 to more than 100 per cent. in per capita contributions, according to the county and the region. This fact applies to town, village and country churches alike. Furthermore, the residence of the minister profoundly affects church finance, even where financial systems are modern. Thus, while village churches with resident ministers average $22.69 per capita in contributions, those without resident pastors average just a little over $10. In the country, as between a resident minister whose church uses an efficient financial system and a church with a non-resident minister, and with no financial system, the former shows nearly 75 per cent. increase in per capita contributions. The actual figures are $21.14 as against $12.39.

The churches in these counties contribute nearly a million and a half dollars annually for all causes. The distribution of this money is rather interesting. In the Southern churches, where the per capita giving is the lowest, the proportion of money given to benevolences is highest, amounting to 37 per cent. This, of course, is in part because the one-room buildings of the South and the pastoral visits once or twice a month do not put a very heavy drain upon the financial resources of the membership.

Of the other regions, the irrigated areas of the Pacific Coast lead. They allocate almost one-third of their total income to benevolent work. The Middle West is next with 31.1 per cent. The Colonial Area and the Range states follow with 27 per cent. and 24.4 per cent. respectively. If it were not for the low benevolent giving of the New England county included within this study, the

record of the Colonial states would approximately equal that of the Middle West and the Pacific.

Half a decade ago it was the unusual country church that gave as much as 25 per cent. of its income to causes other than those connected with its own support. With this sample of twenty-five counties to represent the entire nation, the figure has become 30.4, and for two reasons. First, the success of the Laymen's Missionary Education Movement and the denominational drives; and second, the widening vision of the people themselves, as shown by the response to the propaganda of these organizations.

The Expense Account

Salaries, of course, bulk large in the budget of every church, the proportion ranging from 46.3 per cent. of the church budget in the Colonial Area, a figure nearly equaled by the Range, down to 35.4 per cent. in the irrigated regions of the Pacific Coast. It is, however, in these irrigated areas that the amount per capita given by members for salary of ministers is highest. The other expenses incident to church maintenance are highest in the Pacific Coast and the Range Country, in both of which regions they exceed 30 per cent., while they are lowest in the South. This is just what would be expected. Church building is going on in the two western regions at a more rapid rate than in any other part of America. Moreover, the buildings tend to have more rooms, especially in the irrigated areas; therefore, there is a higher upkeep. For the country as a whole the distribution of rural church income is as follows: Salary, 41.1 per cent.; benevolences, 30.4 per cent.; other expenses, 28.5 per cent.

The Christian Laborer and His Hire

It has been seen from the above that pastors' salaries make up a most important part of church expenses. The salaries paid by the town and country churches to their ministers are surprisingly low: increase has not kept pace with the marked rise in benevolences nor with living costs. Six hundred and fifty-five ministers, including the toiler preachers of the Southern mountains, are included in the study. About one-seventh of this number also follow their secular occupations. Most of the men who give full time to the ministry fall within these four salary groups—$751 to $1,000;

$1,001 to $1,250; $1,251 to $1,500; and $1,501 to $1,750. The peak is reached in the two middle groups of this series; 237 ministers, of the 565 who give their full time to the pastorate, receive between $1,000 and $1,500. It is to be remembered that in these figures is included the $250 allowed for the rental value of each parsonage that is provided free of charge. Variations between regions are rather marked. There are more men, in proportion to the number of churches, receiving more than $2,000 in the Range and Pacific Coast than anywhere else. Only a little less than one out of every ten ministers, nationally speaking, receives this salary.

Churches that enjoy the full time of a pastor pay, on the average, $999.62 toward his support, in which sum is included the rental value of the parsonage. Churches which have a resident minister, but which share him with neighboring stations, average $616 toward his support, the outlying churches contributing the rest of the salary. The average church with a non-resident minister gives only $193 a year to its ministry. These averages are contributions to salary per church. They do not include home mission grants. In the previous paragraphs the grants were included.

The highest average salary for a resident minister giving full time to a single congregation is paid in two extremes of our country: on the Atlantic and Pacific seaboards, where the figure is just a little short of $1,300. The Range and the Middle West churches follow, the former pushing the other regions very closely. It is to be seen, therefore, that throughout America there is a rather stable standard for ministerial support. Economic differences are not nearly so apparent in the salaries of those men who devote all their energies to one church and have no other occupation. Variations governed by economic conditions appear chiefly in the higher salary class. Thus, those pastors receiving more than $2,000 a year are located almost exclusively either in towns or prosperous villages, or they serve churches in the most prosperous agricultural counties among those selected.

Labor That Is in Vain

This revelation of the pastoral salary paid in the rural churches of America is one of the saddest chapters in the study. It needs no word of explanation. For many years the subject of adequate ministerial support has been agitated. Of all professional workers, of whom a high standard of preliminary training is expected, the ministers of the Church are paid the least; nor has the great increase

in the cost of living, which has been considered in the wages of all strata of labor, been considered in this particular case. A slight trend upward is shown in denominational averages, and from the data gathered incidentally in this study, but the total improvement is one in dollars and not in purchasing power. How closely these things relate to the short pastorate, a term of service which is decreasing despite all denominational efforts to increase it, and to the number of men who are forced to surrender the pittance of the ministry, it is impossible to tell. Those who remain in the service of the Church do so with sacrifices involving a vast amount of unknown spiritual, mental and physical suffering. Until the question of adequate ministerial salaries takes precedence over all other phases of church administration and finance there will be a dearth of spiritual leadership, especially in the rural church, where it is conspicuously needed.

The Full-Time Pastor

If the ideal of one pastor for every church in an average situation is correct, it is of interest to note the budgets of the churches which enjoy the full time of one man. They comprise almost one-fourth of all those in this study; while 15 per cent. have each a resident minister who is shared with one or more outlying stations. The Middle West leads with an annual budget of $3,457.11. The Pacific Coast is a few dollars below this sum, while the South follows with just a little short of $3,300 per church. It should be stated, however, that the Southern sample is very small. There are only eleven churches out of the 273 in this Southern region which have full-time resident ministers. The Colonial Area comes next with $2,202 per church, followed by the Range with $1,800. The income of the churches in the Range is, of course, supplemented by home mission aid.

While these regional budget averages are nearly the same, the scale of difference within each region is considerable. Thus, within the Colonial Area it is $1,775 per church in Addison County, Vermont, and $3,226 in Columbia County, Pennsylvania. In the Middle West the variation is from $8,202 in Atchison County, Missouri, to $1,264 in Price County, Wisconsin. Atchison, by the way, has the highest average budget for churches in this class in the study. For the entire country the average budget for rural churches with full-time pastors is $3,063.61.

For the churches with resident ministers who give part-time serv-

ice, the average budget is $1,924.69. The churches with non-resident ministers raise on an average only $558.89. It will be seen, therefore, that while the membership of the average church in the latter group is almost one-half the membership of the average church with a full-time resident pastor, yet the amount of money which it raises is only a little better than one-sixth of the amount annually raised under the budget system by the church with the full-time resident pastor. The more time that any church can have from its minister the more it gives, not only towards ministerial support, but also to missionary causes.

So much for the budget or corporate contribution. There is, however, the widest range in per capita giving in these counties. Durham, North Carolina, is lowest with $7.60 per active member per year. Orange, California, is highest with an individual quota of $37.54. Orange, of course, was the most prosperous of all the counties studied. Prosperity, however, does not necessarily determine the amount of contributions. Thus, Salem County, New Jersey, one of the richest trucking areas in the East, with its average per capita contribution of $17.60 shows rather poorly in comparison with Pend Oreille County, Washington. In Pend Oreille farming is still in the homesteading stage, and the soil is poor; but the average contribution for the county amounts to $24.96 per capita, and in one community falls just a little short of $50. Indeed, even the giving of prosperous Orange County, California, is put to shame by figures such as these.

General Per Capita Giving

Little has been said about per capita giving in the large, as the figures show little that is significant. The range as among the counties has just been indicated. The regional variations are similar with the South lowest, and the Pacific highest, and the Northern Colonial and Middle West regions approximating the national average of $17.89. Such figures include all churches regardless of system used or pastoral service employed and they take no account of the farm income, mortgage debt, land values or other economic factors which condition giving.

Chapter Summary

Equipment

Three-fourths of the churches are one- or two-room buildings of unattractive and nearly uniform design. Church work can be successful in such buildings; but churches with three rooms or more make proportionately from 50 to 300 per cent. better records through various features of the church program, especially in relation to religious education.

Too often larger buildings are not utilized to their full capacity.

The total valuation of rural church buildings in these counties is $6,000,000. Since this property is free from tax the average annual contribution of Government to each church is not less than $75.

Finance

The annual budget, every-member canvass or envelope system are being increasingly developed. One-third of the town and country churches use all three elements in an efficient financial system.

The per capita contributions of these churches exceed those without an efficient financial system by from 12 to 100 per cent., depending on the region.

The resident minister always produces larger per capita contributions than the non-resident.

Thirty per cent. of all monies raised is given to benevolences and 41 per cent. to salaries.

One-third of the resident ministers receive a salary of from $1,000 each to $1,500, in cash or its equivalent. The average salary of the resident minister, including rental value of the parsonage is $1,029.75.

The average budget of a rural church with a full-time resident minister is $3,063.61; for the church with a part-time, resident minister it is $1,924.69; for the church with non-resident minister it is $558.89.

Per capita contributions range from $7.60 in one southern county to $37.54 in Orange County, California.

CHAPTER IX

The Rural Church and Racial Groups

APPROXIMATELY one-third of the new Americans, the foreign-born and their children, are in rural communities. Nearly 30 per cent. of our farmers are of other than American nativity. Almost every other farmer in North Dakota is foreign-born. North Dakota, it should be remembered, is the state of the Non-Partisan League, the state of the most radical political experiments made in this country. In a dozen other states, from one-fifth to two-fifths of the farmers are of foreign blood. Minnesota leads in this respect, and there also the Non-Partisan League has made considerable progress. The problem of the New American, therefore, is a problem of the town and country as well as of the city.

New Blood in Old States

The counties covered in this investigation are no exception to the general rule. Even including those in the South, it is found that the foreign element makes up more than a fifth of the town and country population. Excluding those in the South, more than 28 per cent. of the population in the remaining counties is foreign-born or of foreign extraction. The figures vary considerably with the regions. In the South the number of newcomers from foreign lands is still small. The Northern Colonial Area has counties in which there are almost no foreign-born, and other counties in which foreigners form a very considerable part of the rural population, as is the case, for example, in Addison County, Vermont, into which French Canadians have poured for the last two decades.

The Middle West has the largest proportion of foreigners; there they are slightly in excess of two-fifths of the population. The Pacific Coast follows with the foreign element making up a little more than a third of its population. The Range Country returns an even figure of 25 per cent. The majority of those brought to rural America by comparatively recent immigration, apart from that naturalized foreign stock from our own Continent, is still of North European extraction; but the groups from southern Europe have shown a

relatively larger gain in the last few years. In other words, the rural movements of population are following closely those already experienced by our cities: that is to say, the heavy inflow of North Europeans has been followed by a flood from the Balkans and other South European countries.

With this considerable foreign element within its boundaries, the average rural community has stood helpless and all but hopeless. In some areas the inflow has assumed the proportions of an inundation, with a native American community standing out here and there in sheer isolation. Place names picturesquely indicate the foreign sources of the different national groups which succeeding eddies of the great, ever-changing immigrant stream have deposited over the land. The people brought to a particular rural area by a new inflow have in many cases crowded out those who preceded them. London, Plymouth, Channing, in Wisconsin, for example, were villages settled by the descendants of the Puritans. The indigenous American stock from the New England reservoir, by which the western states were settled, was forced off the Wisconsin land by the engulfing tide of Teutonic and Scandinavian immigration. Once more those of this American stock faced westward, this time to find new homes in Iowa, but leaving stranded communities in the flooded areas whose new postal addresses bore place names of Teutonic or Scandinavian origin.

"I Will Gather All Nations and Tongues"

The North European, for the most part, has had a Protestant tradition, and has brought his church with him. Many of these churches, especially those of the German-speaking people, still use the native language; and there is, in the Middle West, a distinct cleavage between the older and younger elements within these churches over the use of English. This is also true, but to a less extent, of the Scandinavians. It is natural to find the American-born younger generation shedding the European culture and customs of its forbears. Both these racial groups, however, have built churches considerably larger than those of their English-speaking neighbors, great, vigorous churches, which naturally reflect the liturgical traditions that reach back to the historic European foundations. In every region the average budget of these churches surpasses any of those ministering to the native-born population. As is to be expected, their membership is also larger, which accounts for the fact that their per capita giving is less.

Thus, for the whole country the average membership of these foreign-speaking churches is 131 as against seventy-three in the English-speaking organizations. Their average budget is $2,008.92 as against $1,372.94. Their per capita contribution is $15.34 as against $18.80 for the English-speaking churches. There is very little variation in these figures in the Middle West, where the foreign-language group is strongest and is represented by about one-third of the churches in the counties studied. On the Pacific Coast, where the greatest variation in budget occurs, the average church of the foreign group expends more than $3,500 as against $1,900 for the other churches.[1]

Other characteristics of the foreign-language groups are their belief in the settled, resident minister and their tradition of long pastorates. These are strongly reminiscent of their European background with its settled, static, communal and family life. The parish of their minister includes, on the average, only one and three-tenths churches; while his English-speaking colleague has nearly two. It is only in the matter of salaries that the two groups are virtually on the same level; but it is to be remembered that the minister of the foreign-speaking church, with its large membership, has a considerable income from perquisites, another survival of European custom, which materially assists him in making both ends meet.

Eventually these groups, whatever their tradition or denomination, will become English-speaking. Conspicuous rural successes are to be found among those who have arrived at the period of complete Americanization: their church and their community life are in perfect accord with their environment.

Ten years ago the Scandinavian Baptist Church at Big Springs, S. D., held every service in Swedish. To-day almost every activity is conducted in English. The new English-speaking program has brought a new parsonage and a new church building, both of the latest American standard of comfort and utility. The program of the church is deeply spiritual and highly evangelistic; but it also has a social side that closely unites the church with the community.

"They Were Counted as a Strange Thing"

It is, of course, the foreigner outside of organized religion who should cause the Church most concern. The North-European groups, of which we have been speaking, are largely caring for themselves, in contrast with groups from farther south in Europe

[1] These figures do not include the Mexican Missions.

who present an entirely different problem. It is often assumed that the Roman Catholic Church cares for the people of the latter groups. The counties considered contain more than 100,000 new Americans. If we deduct those who are members of the Protestant foreign-speaking churches, and assume that the members of the Roman Catholic churches are all foreign-born, an assumption quite contrary to fact, we find that more than 50,000 of this group are outside the immediate influence of any church, Catholic or Protestant.

Such is the challenging fact which confronts the country church in America to-day. The failure of organized Protestantism to sense the full situation is serious. Education alone cannot Americanize in the country as perhaps it can in the city. The rural school is admittedly too weak. Prof. Brim, of Cornell, reporting at the 1922 meeting of the American Country Life Association, pointed out that for the schools of our greatest Commonwealth half the rural teachers are under twenty-one years of age, and three-fourths of them are lacking in any adequate professional training for their tasks. Coupled with this fact there is the tremendous turnover of rural teachers, amounting to more than 20 per cent. annually. The one-room school is no better able to care for the task of Americanization than is the one-room church.

If the people were awakened to the real situation, the local church, unlike the rural school, could doubtless have behind it, to aid in solving the problem, the national boards with funds and men at their disposal. What, then, is the actual situation?

In most counties the Church is doing next to nothing in its approach to the foreign-born. Too often, in fact, the presence of the foreigners is simply ignored. Hundreds of churches faced with the problem reply that they are "sympathetic" toward the newcomers; and sympathy, where love should be, covers a multitude of sins of omission.

Within a radius of fifty miles of one thriving American town in the Southwest are 2,000 foreign-born, 80 per cent. of them of one nationality. They are gathered in five communities not one of which was in existence four years ago. They are uncared for by either Catholic or evangelical churches. In behalf of the Protestant churches at the trade center, it is calmly stated that they are doing nothing in these communities "because of the foreign population." An examination of church work in all these counties, where the foreign problem is present, is equally disappointing.

In one county, a church has started a small class for the foreign-speaking people; eight churches report from two to ten foreign

children in their Sunday schools; two others in the same community state that they try to interest the foreigners chiefly by distributing tracts. Another church is bringing children of foreigners into the Daily Vacation Bible School. In one rural industrial community, made up of six coal mining neighborhoods, one denomination has two resident women workers who carry on a kindergarten seven and a half months of the year and supervise two Sunday schools. There is an Americanization class of six mothers. The church organization, however, has enrolled, thus far, only twenty-eight native-born; and the pastor gives what time he can spare from an important church in the nearest city.

But such examples as these of an aroused conscience are few; and the problem of the unchurched foreign-born in rural areas will remain grave and unsolved until the cumulative effects of widespread efforts are felt. It is only when a situation is unusual and makes a romantic appeal that we find anything like modern work; and even this is inadequate. In California, for instance, there is a reasonably earnest attempt to reach the untouched Mexican population, and an equally earnest, if less effectual, effort to minister to the Japanese.[2]

"Land Wherein Thou Art a Stranger"

So disappointing were the records from the representative counties which formed the basis for this series of studies, that an additional investigation was undertaken. Sixteen counties were selected from the 500 or 600 in the files of the Interchurch World Movement which had the highest proportion of non-English-speaking foreigners. The results of this study have already been published.[3] In only one of these counties is *any* church reaching as many as 50 per cent. of the foreign-born population. In that particular county the number of new Americans increased from 1,000 in 1870 to 8,000 in 1920.

In four of the sixteen counties, nothing at all is being done by the churches. In a mountain county of Kentucky there are 545 non-English-speaking foreigners, not one of whom has been reached by the churches. The county's coal mines have attracted 57 Hungarians, 194 Italians, 84 Greeks, 100 Slavs, 100 Poles, 10 Mexicans. These people are domiciled in the parishes of seven churches; but

[2] See the committee's publication, "Irrigation and Religion," Chapters 9 and 10.

[3] *The Christian Work*, November 27, 1920.

no real effort has been made to win them. In a western county, which is underchurched, 1,598 foreign-born are so situated that either there is no church in a community or the churches there do not reach far enough geographically to include the foreign-born in their parishes. Here the need is for more men and more churches, that the ministry to the new people can be planned.

Not always is the problem complicated by underchurching. In one county there is a foreign population of 2,240, and there are sixty-six churches for a total of 14,453 people. Surely these should be enough to care for the foreigners. But the county is one in which the religious situation is deplorable through multiplicity of churches and a non-resident ministry. In nine of the sixteen counties, the churches have made beginnings in Americanization. The total of non-English-speaking people in these counties is 16,419. Some are in areas which are sufficiently churched or are overchurched, and some are in underchurched regions. In four of the underchurched counties the ministers have been trying to handle a task which is too big for them; and reënforcements are needed to take advantage of the opportunities which lie among the groups of "new Americans."

In all these counties the country churches of the older Americans are about the average in membership and equipment. Their seating capacity is ample to make room for all the foreigners. In five of these nine counties a continuation of the present methods of work should yield results. Despite all the handicaps which exist, fifty-three churches have won as members a total of 471 of the new Americans in their communities.

"I Have Gone the Way the Lord Sent Me"

A Protestant Episcopal mission has won success among the Italians of Wind Gap, Pa. Its congregation last year contributed $100 for benevolences and missions. The method of approach was through a friendly, social and educational program, with classes, socials and community service, and it has led to the acceptance of Jesus Christ by 125 members of this thriving mission, which may be taken as a type of several that are successful in providing a church for these people. It is felt by the leaders in such church enterprises that the newly arrived foreigner is too new to mingle quickly and freely in the church life of the community. It is suggested that he would do better in a church of his own race until he understands Protestantism more thoroughly.

The other type of church that works successfully with the New

American has taken him directly into the church life of the community. Judging by numbers only, this is the slower way, though many think the surer. It is certainly less expensive, as it does not call for any new organization or for another salaried worker. Such churches report from a few up to twenty-five foreigners among their numbers. The methods vary. Some churches have succeeded through constant visitation, good fellowship and social recognition. The members have been careful, as church members and Christians, to show no discrimination in the routine of daily life. In one place the minister went out and picked berries with the foreigners, establishing the point of contact by his sympathetic helpfulness. Other pastors have helped the newcomers in their farming. One minister showed his sincerity, when timid foreigners would not come to church, by holding services in their homes. Another pastor has found his work for better housing and better health conditions an open sesame to the hearts of the New Americans in his parish.

Some churches opened their doors to the foreign-born for services of their own, or organized special Bible Schools for their children. In one way or another, community service has been successfully used. This has included a variety of things besides the work already mentioned. Classes in English have been formed. Special literature has been distributed and found most helpful as an entering wedge. The foreign mother who can read is especially grateful for leaflets from the Children's Bureau of the Federal Government dealing with the care of children. Games for the younger children, athletics for boys and young men, have helped. The boy and girl scout programs under church auspices are most useful. Efforts spelling neighborliness, human interest and kindness have opened the heart of the New American to receive the message of the Church.

Methods such as these have helped in the work among the Mexicans in Southern California, which brought success after persistent effort covering a period of several years. This example of high purpose and sustained effort is one to be generally followed. In addition to the program of worship and religious education among the Mexicans, these churches conduct classes in English, music and sewing, and well-organized clubs in which social and recreational work is done during the week.

Corporate Responsibilities

Regarding what ought to be done in the situation, it seems evident that national boards and committees existing for the purpose of deal-

ing with the New American must pay more attention to the problem presented in rural areas. Hitherto these organizations have rightly studied the urban problem, the crowding and concentration in colonies that so urgently press for consideration. But the rural phase is quite as important, and far more rewarding, because of the static condition of New Americans definitely wedded by ownership to locale or community.

Then, too, individual churches must take advantage of the opportunity afforded them by the presence of newcomers within the reach of their influence. A church to which the opportunity is presented must do this or be justly criticized for having become a class church. Either Christian democracy is broad enough for all races or it is a failure.

Finally, the local churches should discover New Americans, and should be particularly alert to form contacts with the very earliest arrivals of a given group, since the relations established with them are rewarding for two reasons: because they are more susceptible and open to advances in their first contacts, and because they will be perhaps of controlling influence among those of their kind who follow.

The newcomers will be made to feel that they are welcome; and instead of being forced to remain a people apart because of their nationality, will find the process of becoming Americans quickened and made easier. This will call for the best that a church and its community can offer.

Chapter Summary

One-third of our New Americans are in rural communities.

In some states every other farmer is of foreign birth.

Churches of the foreign-language group tend to be considerably larger than those of older American tradition. Their budgets, too, are larger, but their per capita contributions are slightly lower.

The Protestant and Catholic country churches together have reached only one-half of the New Americans.

The Protestant Church too often feels no responsibility for the New American and deliberately avoids him.

There is a language of kindly sympathy and practical service which the New American understands and to which he responds. Some churches are proving this.

The New American on the land is making good; but the Church has not made good with the New American.

CHAPTER X

Tenant and Migrant

AT one time the farms on this continent were virtually all owned by those who tilled them. That day has passed. We have now, in large numbers, the tenant farmers and the migrant or seasonal laborers as well as the regular farmhands.

The last decade has deepened the general conviction that an increasing proportion of tenants in any given farm population under the conditions usually prevailing is likely to prove detrimental to the social and religious life of the community. The tenant and the farmer who owns the land he tills work under entirely different conditions. From the time a tenant assumes charge of its operation, a farm must support, in part at least, another family besides his own. This means increased labor on the part of the operator. To make matters worse, the average tenant in America operates under a one-year lease, and has no means of knowing how long he will remain on any given farm. Thirty-eight per cent. of the farms in the United States are now tenant operated. This leads the tenant to adopt farming methods that will let him take as much as possible from the land in a short time rather than methods intended to produce the best possible yield over a period of years. It complicates and unsettles his social relations with the community, of which he does not feel himself to be a part. He is not as interested in its development as would be the case if he had a stake in the land itself.

Leaders in the rural movement have been calling attention for some time to the possibility that the local church may bridge this gap between the tenant and the community, and may aid conspicuously in removing much of the menace of the tenant problem. What then is the situation? In the first place the data here presented indicate no more than a general tendency. In some of the richest farming regions in America are found strong churches largely supported by tenant farmers. Every officer in several of the strongest corn-belt churches of one denomination is a tenant farmer. Frequently, too, in these communities, there are consolidated schools. The most cordial relations exist between owners and tenants, often

relationships cemented by family ties. In many cases the relations are so satisfactory that there is an expectation of uninterrupted tenure on the farm for a considerable period of years.

It should be stated that until the number of tenant farmers exceeds 20 per cent. of the total number of operating farmers, the Church seems to reach both economic groups with equal facility. This is true apparently without exception. When, however, the percentage of tenancy is above this figure and particularly when it exceeds 33 per cent., there is a change in conditions.[1] Thus, in Sedgwick County, Kansas, and Clay County, Iowa, where the number of tenant farmers is 56 per cent. and 52 per cent. respectively of the total number of farm operators, the number of tenants represented in the total farm-operator membership of the churches is only 18 per cent. and 21 per cent. Similar figures obtain in such counties as Salem, New Jersey, Hugh, South Dakota, and certain others, especially in large parts of the South.[2]

The Farm Laborer

The hired man on the farm has been a historic figure in American rural life. But since the beginning of the war he has all but departed that life. City wages attracted him to the larger centers of population. Subsequently farm incomes dropped to such a point that the smaller operator could get on without a hired man. Unfortunately, the number of farm laborers in the total farming population of the counties studied is so small as not to warrant the drawing of deductions. A statistical summary is of such a meager nature that it would not be fair to base upon it an assertion that the Church had failed to reach the hired man on the farm, although this assertion has often been made, perhaps with considerable justification.

The Migrant Worker

American agriculture depends, much more than most people are aware, upon the labor of migrant workers who travel back and forth across America with the seasons, following one crop or another. Sometimes, as in the case of the wheat harvest, all the laborers are men. In the sugar beet fields, the canneries and the cranberry swamps, whole families are often employed. A million and a half is the strength of this unorganized, unskilled, uncared-for migrant

[1] See Tables XI and XII in Chapter III.
[2] See Prof. E. C. Branson's study, "The Church and Landless Men."

army. These workers are in any particular community for only a brief period of from ten days to six or eight weeks, according to the nature of the crop to be harvested. They present to the Church a great opportunity which has been unperceived or ignored in all these counties. The counties covered by the Interchurch World Movement study, for example, gave only two or three instances of any service for the migrant.

In one outstanding case, the Methodist Circuit at Larned, Kansas, is setting an example for the rest of the churches of the Kansas wheat belt. When the migrant harvesters arrive at the county seat town, they find awaiting them a dormitory and welfare room with facilities for writing and reading and resting. In the welfare room at the court house, concerts are held frequently; and on Sundays a service is conducted in the church by the pastor and the combined choirs of his circuit. These community attentions are deeply appreciated. The Larned ministers ascertain the names of the men and where they are working, and immediately mail to them invitations to attend the services to be held during their stay. The farmer employers coöperate with the churches in making it possible for the men to attend both the services and the entertainments. The town has voted to close its stores on Sundays. Larned has eliminated the difficulties that ordinarily attend the sudden concentration of a large number of men in a small town and country community. Moreover, its friendly attitude attracts a better class of labor to the town.

In Harford County, Maryland, another significant enterprise has been initiated by an enlightened cannery owner in coöperation with several of the Women's Boards of Home Missions. Here entire families come. The cannery proprietor has set aside a building which contains a nursery and dispensary, a domestic science and lunch room, and a big porch. Babies are cared for during working hours by a trained nurse, who also administers first aid in case of accident. Two other workers conduct a school which includes religious exercises, Bible stories, elementary school subjects and singing. At noon a domestic science worker prepares a hot lunch and uses the opportunity to teach the little girls something about cooking.

There is organized play on the porch, in the neighboring woods, and on the playground which has been equipped with simple apparatus. After working hours there are classes for the larger boys and girls in English, arithmetic, cooking and sewing. There are occasional evening entertainments for the whole colony. This shows what has been done by churches in communities visited by the migrants upon whose labor the communities depend for all the profits

of the year. The human interest is reciprocal. The migrants prefer the places where they are made at home, and the communities with this vision of social and religious service attract efficient and trustworthy laborers.

The situation probably calls for national consideration. A mobile staff of workers ought to follow harvests north through the summer, much as the welfare workers in France followed the movements of the troops. With such a staff local coöperation would be very much more effective. But Larned, Kansas, has proved that assistance from outside, such as prevails in Harford County, is not a necessity.

Chapter Summary

Farm tenancy in the United States has been steadily increasing, especially in the more favored agricultural areas.

The Church reaches the owner and the tenant farmer with equal success until the proportion of tenant-operated farms rises above one-fifth.

Many an important crop, and the prosperity of hundreds of communities, would be ruined without the annual help of the migrant worker.

Neglect of the social and religious welfare of these workers by the Church is all but universal. Where the ministry has been extended, it has been deeply appreciated. Such welfare work as is done ought to be greatly extended.

CHAPTER XI

The Rural Church Program

THE country church may be said to maintain an organization on a minimum program of twelve preaching services a year. In other words, there are churches still active though they are closed more than three-fourths of the time; they have no Sunday schools, no women's societies, nor any other organizations; nor do they have regular pastors. They form the minimum group, just above which are churches that may be said to have the average or usual type of program. This program provides for from two to eight services of worship a month, for a Sunday school and a women's missionary society, but for little or nothing else. Three churches out of five in rural America are content to remain within one or the other of these groups.

These are the churches that still live in the tradition of the country church of the pioneer days, or at best of the church that immediately succeeded the pioneer period, both of which ministered to groups of families who had settled on land they expected to cultivate and to own forever. It is this type of church that has been completely outdistanced in the tremendous developments of the last thirty years. These three decades have seen, in rural America, the greatest social dissolutions and integrations of any period in history.

Nothing New Under the Sun

Any country pastor of insight and experience can bear witness to the truth of this. Never before has the disintegration of rural life been so apparent as it is to-day. Despite all the splendid work that has been done in drawing together town and country into a composite well-organized whole, there is in certain areas a well-marked cleavage between these two parts of the rural community. In the more conservative farming regions, the breach between the older and the younger generation is steadily widening. In every interest, economic, political, legislative and even social, restless leaders are eagerly searching for new trails to progress and improvement.

Meanwhile, three out of every five churches are heedless of the

cross-currents that sweep past steadily, undermining their very existence. They are still making programs in the conviction that "there is nothing new under the sun." They have entirely lost the full significance of the Master's declaration that He had unspoken thoughts into which His followers and their Church must be led in the centuries that stretched ahead of Him. To maintain a high order of leadership and of service, a church must be alert and ready to adapt its program to the changing conditions of those to whom it ministers. If this, then, is a legitimate spiritual ideal for the Church, what has been done toward reaching out and relating the gospel to those many groups with which the Church has to deal? Around each group, whether of boys or girls, of young people, or of men and women, cluster a variety of problems related to the present day and involving the Church in economic and social, no less than in its religious, obligations.

One of the first rural awakenings was evidenced by the extension of women's work in country churches. This step was followed by the young people's movement. Founded within the memory of men still young, this great movement swept the youth in the population centers of America with an enthusiasm that had never before been equaled. Rare is the city church that does not enlist the loyalty and support of its young people. While an organization with this objective is properly an activity in the field of religious education, it is also a social organization built on the idea that the Church ought to furnish an avenue for young Christians of both sexes to discuss problems of mutual concern, to coöperate in definite service, and to enjoy wholesome pleasures. The rural young people's societies are almost entirely of the Christian Endeavor type.

Young People's Organizations

They are known in the different denominations by such names as the Epworth League, the Baptist Young People's Union, the Luther League, and the like. The programs of these societies engage the activities of not only the young people of college age and those still older, but also the adolescents and the children who are organized into so-called intermediate and junior societies. Only 35 per cent. of the churches considered in this study have such societies. In other words, they are found in 368 churches, which have a total of 500 organizations. Three-fourths of these are for the young people and one-fourth for boys and girls.

It is interesting to trace the distribution of these societies. On

the Pacific Coast every other church has at least one such organization; and the Range states, despite the great distances which separate the people, are only 12 per cent. behind the record of the Pacific Coast states. In the Middle West and Colonial areas 37 and 35 per cent. of the churches respectively have young people's programs of this kind. In the South the ratio falls to slightly less than one church out of every five. As between town, village and country, the town churches seem to give most attention to this work, three out of every four churches having a young people's society. In the village slightly less than half the churches, and in the country only one out of every five, have so organized their young people.

In fact, it is safe to say that the young people's movement in America to-day has accomplished less in the countryside than anywhere else. Forty or more full-fledged church members under twenty-one years of age were found in each of about one hundred country churches, not one of which had a young people's organization of any kind, if we exclude unorganized Sunday school classes. In a score of these churches the members under twenty-one years of age ranged in number from seventy-five to 150. With a common realization of the young people's problem as existing in a post-war world, with its confused domestic and social values, it is unfortunate that there are churches that make so indifferent an effort to enlist the vigor and enthusiasm of their young members. The need for effective young people's organizations was never greater than it is to-day; it is through them that the leaders of to-morrow may be developed for Christian service.

The program of the average society ought to be full of engaging activities. Instead it provides merely for a weekly meeting of worship and devotion with a centering of interest upon a topic determined by the overhead organization. Often the minister is not present. In a few cases organizations of some vitality have been found which were formed years ago, and which are still controlled by the charter members. In these cases, however, a generation has intervened and the founders have been unable to bridge the gap between their generation and the one which now ought to have the benefit of organized young people's work. Of course many of these societies have their social activities; but in few instances are their members mobilized under a program that evokes their enthusiasm for effective social and religious service to the church and the community. The mission study classes have been organized in a few instances, and in the more efficient societies the program of the national organizations has been followed with local adaptations.

Wanted: a Policy

These activities, few and often perfunctory, are valuable as opening the way for more effective programs. It is clear, however, that no effort has been made to organize these activities and to link them for larger service and for the strategic purpose of corporate and functional strength. For instance, an intimate, clearly defined relationship should exist between the young people's society and the Sunday school. The latter should feed the more potential society. The promotional literature of both the State Sunday School Associations and the State Christian Endeavor Unions advocates very much the same type of work. Too often, even when a church has both a Sunday school and young people's societies, these function more on account of habit or in deference to custom than as strategic organizations in a coördinated church program. The value of the young people's society as a training school in service and as an avenue for self-expression under proper guidance can hardly be overestimated.

In the country these young people's organizations are uncommon; and it is here that they make, wherever they do exist, the strongest appeal to the young people. The average attendance of young people's societies in country churches is 78 per cent. of the enrollment; in the village it is a scant two-thirds; and in the towns it is 62 per cent. In all three types of communities these voluntary organizations, where they exist, draw at least as well as the supervised Sunday schools. The attendance record in the country, where there are the fewest young people's societies, is phenomenal. This is probably because they bulk larger in the life of the rural community than in the life of the town or the village.

This fact points to two things. The young people's movement should be greatly extended in the countryside where it is so much appreciated. The societies in village and town should be made to function to their utmost capacity. It is also clear that they need proper correlation with the other avenues of religious education and community service which are at the command of the churches in the larger centers.

"When Thou Wast Young Thou Girdest Thyself"

The Young People's Societies provide the most effective means by which the Church in town and country can enlist the loyalty, energy and enthusiasm of its youth. They serve to test those quali-

ties of potential leadership first developed in the Sunday school; and form the continuing bond between the Sunday school and the Church. In every region churches with young people's societies have a larger proportion of minors in their membership than those churches without these organizations, the respective figures being 28 per cent. and 24 per cent. Moreover, in the important matter of annual accession, the churches with young people's societies make a record per church 29 per cent. better than the record of those without such societies.

In the course of this study a few outstandingly successful young people's societies came to light in these counties, and their success makes them stimulating examples. Their success, however, is due to elaborate organizations; each age-group and each sex-group is provided for in an organization that has its place in a carefully devised scheme for the coördination of activities. In this way the problems of adolescence are met in a way to insure health of body and of mind. In one church, where there are young people's intermediate and junior societies which hold regular meetings, there are also clubs for the boys and the girls of the intermediate and junior societies which provide activities suited to age and sex. That church is rewarded, among other ways, by a greater individual, as well as corporate, appreciation of the joint religious and social events. That kind of organization naturally calls for simple equipment. In this church a very useful part of its equipment is a "hut" 16′x24′, built by the boys themselves, in which there are bookshelves, reading-tables, and games. The church also owns a basket-ball court. In the "hut" lessons are studied, and conferences and socials are held under the supervision of church leaders. Both the Boy Scouts and the Girl Scouts have the exclusive use of the cabin during specified periods.

These organizations for the rising generation are the outward or visible signs of the Church's interest in the inward or spiritual life of its young people. Most of the casualties in church membership occur between the ages of eleven and fifteen. These are the well-recognized crucial years. To win boys and girls in the adolescent stage, the Church must adapt its message to the thoughts and feelings that dominate their awakening minds. The hour-a-week religious education is not sufficient to capture and hold the adolescent. At this time both mind and body are restless; and there is an inquisitive, adventurous interest concerning the mysteries of life. Anything that is fit for the life of the community may properly come within the purview of the Church. And by none, perhaps, is

this truth accepted more unquestioningly than by the adolescent boy and girl.

As the Twig Is Bent

These facts are the daily concern of our educational system, reputed to be the finest in the world; and they are, or should be, matters of common knowledge. And yet only thirty-nine of the 1,047 churches upon which this study is based, have boys' organizations, while fifty-six care for their girls.

Compared with the results achieved among these tender-age groups by the Y. M. C. A., and by Y. W. C. A. in dealing with girls, what the Church has accomplished along similar lines appears insignificant and perfunctory.

Where the Church has cultivated its youth it has gleaned a larger harvest of life-service recruits. The interest of the rising generation also holds the parents; and of all the thousand churches only those with organizations for boys and girls are found invariably to have the richest programs, and the strongest grip upon their communities. Almost all of the churches with those organizations rate 70 per cent. better on the Par Standard [1] for country churches than do the others.

The causes of failure are too often the same. The average church provides a program that ignores the yearnings and ardors of youth. The Roman Catholic and the Jewish communions have more to teach Protestant bodies in this field than in any other.[2]

In the non-religious field, boys and girls have been quite as much neglected. There are in the communities studied in this survey, about thirty boys' and girls' organizations which are not under church auspices, while there are 655 organizations for the men and nearly 300 for women. In other words, these communities, in their organizations consider almost exclusively the social longings of the adults and give no thought to the social longings of age- and sex-groups to whom the phenomena of life are just unfolding. This chapter of the study is the most pathetic; and no great imagination is needed to sense its poignant implications. These clearly involve the neglect of young America by every agency for spiritual and intellectual improvement except the weekly Sunday school of the church with its stereotyped program, and the formalized education of the country school.

[1] See pages 169 ff.
[2] See American Volume, World Survey, Interchurch World Movement, and W. S. Athearn's "Indiana Survey of Religious Education."

Men's and Women's Organizations

Five hundred and seventy-nine churches, or about 55 per cent. of the total, have 735 women's organizations. The great majority of these are organized for the sole purpose of aiding the church. Most of the remainder are missionary societies. The program is rather stereotyped. Only occasionally has a church been found whose women's organization has departed from the orthodox program of quilting and holding bazaars and suppers. In one of these churches the women's organization, in addition to assistance given to the church, takes an active part in the problems of motherhood, in the school, in domestic economy and other practical phases of women's activity.

For instance, this particular organization never allows its hostess to choose her own refreshments. The domestic science committee of the club arranges the menu to show the value of some particular food and how it should be prepared. Another women's organization sells its products through the sister organization of a city church, which is a most useful type of coöperation. There are more than twice as many channels for women's activities within the churches as there are without; but it is surprising to find that, of the churches studied, nearly half (47 per cent.) were without this type of agency. It is the smaller open country churches, especially in the South, that lack the women's organizations.

Women are, however, very much better organized than are the men. Only thirty-nine churches were found with men's clubs and twenty of these were in the Colonial states. Apparently the program of the rural church has never gripped the men sufficiently to engage their united efforts in a corporate task. Men's social activities seem to be limited to the usual lodges. These organizations, however, are found more frequently in the villages, though there are many in the country or the town; and they are apt to occur in clusters. The villages that have fraternal orders have an average of three to the village.

To the tasks included under the term community service, such as law enforcement, bringing the standards and ideals of the Church to the business organizations of any given community, acting as big brothers to the growing adolescents, and so on through a varied range of activities, the men of rural churches are found to be unresponsive. They appear to have no conception of these challenging responsibilities. This is a deficiency which may be laid to the system under which the country church operates. But the absence of such

organizations in most regions, except the Pacific and the Colonial, may be attributed to deeper causes, as indicated above. Briefly, the Church fails really to give the men a task that will challenge their constructive abilities and hold their interest. To come to grips with problems in the modern country church one must establish a contact with the social and economic life of the community. Many of the successful pastors of a rural church are found to be identified with such activities as the fraternal orders, the Rotary Club at the county seat, or the county chamber of commerce, where their presence is a power for good and an indication that the Church is an intimate part of all phases of community life.

Ideally, perhaps, the needs of organization for age- and sex-groups can be met through the church Sunday school; and there are churches that utilize this medium. But the experience of the survey seems to show that to do this a church must have a greater than the ordinary organization within the school, more leaders and a more flexible program. None the less the survey data bearing on this point are so meager that it is not possible to decide whether or not the Sunday school ought to be the only agency for the week-day program of the church. What does emerge, however, is the fact that a church with a week-day program exerts a wider influence, shows a better organization, consistent contributions, more members, a greater range of growth, and more life-work recruits. The question of the character and scope of such extra-ecclesiastical activities, of larger community service, must in each case be determined by the exigencies of the local situation.

The Time Was Ripe for a Standard

The variations in program and equipment are so many that it would seem as if the time had arrived for some basis or standard for grading a church. For this purpose a so-called Par Standard, worked out and approved by the Town and Country Committee of the Home Mission Council, and developed by the Interchurch World Movement has been used in these studies. This Standard has been projected, not as an ideal, but as a measurable example of what the church may, in all reasonableness, expect to attain. In its critical application no attempt has been made to give comparative value to the various points included. They are by no means of equal significance, though all of them discuss complete equipment and programs. The schedules used cover only twenty-three of the thirty points listed in this Standard, and the gradings have perforce held to these

twenty-three points. It is found, however, that the average church has a grading of 40 per cent. on these points. The Pacific region led all the others by a rating of almost 50 per cent. The Colonial Area was second with 44.9 per cent., the Middle West third, the Range fourth, and the South fifth in the national rating.

The Standard can be subdivided into such topics as Physical Equipment, the Ministry, Finance, Religious Education, Service, and Coöperation. Under these heads the Pacific Coast again either makes the highest rating in each division or equals it, except that it is third in Finance. For the country as a whole the best ratings are made in Physical Equipment with its percentage of 51.8, and in Finance with a percentage of 49.9. The Ministry columns shows a total of 43.1 per cent. Religious Education is a little short of 33.3 per cent., while Service and Coöperation is a bad fifth with only 17.6 per cent. of the possible total number of points.

Eighteen points or more on Par denote a successful church; and from a group of more than a thousand churches considered in this study, only thirty have reached that figure. Twenty of these are in the villages, eight in the towns and two in the country. Several of those of the village type, strangely enough, are found in very small villages. Only one church was discovered with as many as twenty-two of the twenty-three possible points. The appended schedule gives, at a glance, the basis of study and the approach to the problem.

Par Standard

Adequate Physical Equipment

Up-to-date parsonage
Adequate church auditorium
Social and recreational equipment
Well-equipped kitchen
Organ or piano
Sunday school rooms
Stereopticon or moving-picture machine
Sanitary toilets
Horse sheds or parking space
Property in good repair

Pastor

Resident pastor
Full time pastor
Service every Sunday
Minimum salary, $1,200.

Finance

Church budget adopted annually
Every member canvass
Benevolence equals 25 per cent. current expense

Meetings

Coöperation with other churches in community
Systematic evangelism

Parish

Church serves all racial or occupational groups

Religious Education

Sunday school held entire year
Sunday school enrollment equal to church membership
Attempt to bring pupils into church
Special instruction for church membership
Teacher training or normal class
Provision for leadership training

Program of Work

Organized activities for age- and sex-groups
Coöperation with boards and denominational agencies
Program adopted annually, 25 per cent. of membership participating
Church reaching entire community

It had been hoped that the study of these twenty-six counties would reveal a sufficient number of conspicuously successful churches to warrant their plans and methods being described. Unfortunately this was not the case. The facts then have been reported as they are. In a separate study the Committee on Social and Religious Surveys investigated the most successful town and country churches which it could find anywhere in America.[1]

These churches, graded by the above standard, more than doubled the average rating with a record of 85.5 per cent. On the basis of the actual working experience of these successful churches a new par standard of fifty points was worked out. This new standard summarizes the average working program of the successful rural church. It follows:

New Par Standard

Physical Equipment

1. A comfortable, attractive parsonage with modern improvements, furnished rent free.
2. Auditorium with seating capacity adequate to maximum attendance at regular services.
3. Pipe organ or piano.
4. Space for social and recreational purposes fitted with movable chairs and a platform, and large enough for the largest crowds in the habit of assembling there.
5. Separate rooms or curtained spaces for Sunday school classes or departments.
6. Moving-picture machine or stereopticon facilities.
7. A well-planned, well-equipped kitchen.
8. Sanitary lavatories.

[1] See "Tested Methods in Town and Country Churches" and "Churches of Distinction in Town and Country."

9. Parking space for automobiles or horsesheds.
10. All property kept in good repair and sightly condition.
11. Bulletin boards for display of church announcements.
12. Playground.
13. Recreational equipment—games, volley ball, croquet, quoits (indoor and outdoor) and the like.

Religious and Missionary Education

14. Sunday school maintained throughout the year.
15. Sunday school enrollment at least equal to church membership, with an average attendance of at least two-thirds of its membership.
16. Definite and regular attempt to bring pupils into church membership, and specific instruction in preparation therefor.
17. Teacher training or normal class regularly provided.
18. Definite provision for enlistment and training of leaders for church and community work other than in Sunday school.
19. Communicant classes regularly held in preparation for church membership.
20. Week-day religious instruction provided.
21. Daily Vacation Bible School held.
22. School of Missions, or systematic Mission Study class regularly held.
23. The missionary work of the church regularly presented from the pulpit and in the Sunday school.
24. At least one representative in professional Christian service.

Finance

25. The church budget, including both local expenses and benevolences, adopted annually by the congregation.
26. Every-member canvass for weekly offerings made annually on the basis of the local and benevolent budget adopted; all church members and adherents canvassed; envelope system used.
27. The budget of benevolence either meeting the denominational apportionment in full or equal to one-third of the current expense budget (Interchurch standard 25 per cent.).
28. All current bills paid monthly.
29. A systematic plan of payments on principal and interest of debt on the church property, if any.
30. Property insured.

Pastor

31. A pastor resident within the bounds of the community.
32. A pastor giving full time to the work of this church.
33. The pastor receiving a total salary of at least $1,500 a year and free use of house (Interchurch figure, $1,200).

Program

34. At least one service of worship every Sunday.
35. Regular mid-week services.
36. Church works systematically to extend its parish to the limits of the community.
37. Church works systematically to serve all occupational classes in the community and all racial elements which do not have their own Protestant churches.
38. A definite program setting goals for the year's work adopted annually by the officers and congregation and held steadily before the attention of the church.
39. A definite assumption of responsibility with respect to some part of this program (as in 38) by at least 25 per cent. of the active members.
40. Systematic evangelism aimed to reach the entire community and every class in the community.

41. A minimum net membership increase of 10 per cent. each year.
42. Community service a definite part of the church's work, including a definite program of community coöperation led by or participated in by the church.
43. Definite organized activities for all the various age- and sex-groups in the congregation and community (as in Young People's Society, Men's Brotherhood, Boy Scouts, or similar efforts).
44. A systematic and cumulative survey of the parish with a view to determining the church relationships and religious needs of every family, and such a mapping of the parish as will show the relationships of each family to local religious institutions together with a continuous and cumulative study of the social, moral and economic forces of the community, with a view to constant adaptation of program to need.

Coöperation

45. Coöperation with other churches of the community in a definite program for community betterment.
46. Coöperation with state and county interdenominational religious agencies.
47. Coöperation with local community organizations.
48. Coöperation with county, state, or national welfare agencies.
49. Coöperation with local and county agricultural agencies.
50. Coöperation with denominational boards.

Chapter Summary

The average country church has not adapted its program to the changed conditions of rural life.

The greatest field in this country untouched by the young people's movement is that which includes the villages and the countryside.

The program of the average young people's society is lifeless and devoted to mere routine.

The relationship between the Sunday school and the young people's society in the average congregation has never been thought out. Yet the presence of a young people's society, even such as it is, means more young people, increased membership and more life-work recruits.

The greatest untouched field of Christian effort in rural America is the work for boys and girls.

Women's organizations outnumber organizations of any other group except the Sunday schools.

The broader the program of the church the larger apparently are its spiritual results.

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